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MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

THOUGHTS

ON

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

BY

H. C. WATERSTON.

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION LIBRARY 1962

"The life of man is in reality but one continued education, the end of which is to make himself perfect." — DEGERANDO.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE title of this book was first given to a Lecture which the author was requested to deliver before the American Institute in 1835. It is now given to this volume, because, though not strictly appropriate to all its pages, it covers the general idea of the book. Four of the Addresses have already been published, and were received with unexpected favor by many who had long devoted themselves to the cause of Education. It is partly at the suggestion of such, that the additional essays have been prepared, and are now presented to the public. For the last ten years, the writer has felt a deep interest in the religious instruction of the young, and hopes that what has been gathered from personal experience may give more per-

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manent value to the following pages. The poetry scattered through the volume has been the natural expression of feeling at various times, and is now published, not without some hesitation, as connecting links between the chapters. Miscellaneous as the volume may at first appear, it is trusted that there will be seen throughout a unity of design, and that some thoughts may be suggested which will be of service to others.

Boston, January, 1842.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

HAVING been called upon for a second edition of this book, the Author has revised it and made such improvements as have suggested themselves. The former edition met with a most kind reception in this country. It has also been republished in London; and, from the favorable notice it has received on both sides of the water, the writer is encouraged to hope, that, as it has awakened some interest, so it may also have accomplished some good.

It has been no small gratification to know that those who have given time and attention to the subject of Education have not only testified their strong sympathy with the views

expressed in these pages, but have made efforts to extend them.

May this little volume continue to suggest useful hints to inquiring minds. As far as its thoughts are good may they be scattered like seeds upon the wind, until they shall fall upon hearts ready to receive them. If such should be the result, the writer will have nothing more to desire.

Boston, December, 1843.

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INTRODUCTION.

"I here present thee with a hive of bees, laden some with wax, and some with honey. Fear not to approach! There are no wasps, there are no hornets here.

"If some wanton bee should chance to buzz about thine ears, stand thy ground and hold thy hands; there 's none will sting thee, if thou strike not first."

QUARLES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE term Education, in its widest sense, covers all those influences that call forth character, whether in the school, the domestic circle, or amid the works of nature. So also the terms Moral and Spiritual Culture may be applied to all those influences which tend to develope the moral and spiritual powers. These influences may come directly from living instructers, from books, or from the world ; the outward creation with its manifold wonders, and life, with its varied discipline, may excite, and quicken, and call forth the nature which God has so richly endowed.

In the great work of Spiritual Culture, the intellect has its important place ; still, this is not the only, or even the highest power of the soul. The intellect may be highly cultivated, while the moral nature remains dormant, or lies palsied by disease. So, on the other hand, the moral powers may be quickened, while the intellect is

neglected. The moral and intellectual should be developed in harmony. They should aid each other. The spiritual, in its truest sense, covers the intellect; it presupposes it. The idea of duty is connected with the idea of thought. Justice, benevolence, and veracity, infer the capacity, and the duty, of acquiring knowledge. The act of worshipping an All-wise Creator, who has made us in his own image, and has desired us to grow in his likeness, implies that we have the ability to apprehend his attributes, and are bound to awaken every inward faculty, to increase in wisdom, and become like Himself. The spiritual powers should never be dissevered from the intellectual. The cultivation of the former will give vigor to the latter. They will direct the whole nature to its highest good.

Religion, though she often takes up her abode in the uncultivated mind, does so, not because she loves ignorance, but because she would emancipate the soul and liberate it from bondage. She comes to impart light; to give freedom and vigor to the intellect; to open before the inward eye scenes of supernatural grandeur; to impart purity to the affections; to inspire a love of improvement. Has not Christianity always extend-

ed civilization, elevated the arts, encouraged literature, and poured, wherever she has been cherished, constantly increasing brightness over the path of mankind? What Christianity has done in the world she has accomplished by her influence on the individual soul, and her influence on the individual soul is to kindle a desire for moral and spiritual growth, and this by means of culture. Perfection comes not at once. The path stretches for ever onward, shining more and more to the perfect day. The advancing mind demands care, watchful protection, wise guidance. It unfolds leaf by leaf, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.

The infant comes to us without any positive character. Its mind is filled with the seeds of things, with undeveloped capabilities. We are its guardians. God has given us a double duty, a duty which, looked upon wisely, is a pleasure and privilege; — first, to educate ourselves, and second, to educate others. We have gained much from the past, we owe much to the future. The young mind is placed under our care. As it grows into childhood its young powers put forth. Numberless influences encircle it, all of which have their effect. Every shower, and every cloudless day, bring some change to a field

of grain ; so with the soul, every word, and every look, every note of music, and every passing occurrence may produce some effect, however imperceptible to the careless eye. But while all things bring their influence, there is none so great as that of mind upon mind. Here is the primal source of evil and of good. Thought can elicit thought ; love awaken love. No such magnetic power is known as that of soul upon soul. The will may be paralyzed or strengthened ; the intellect shrouded or brought forth ; the conscience deadened or made alive ; the fire of genius quenched or kindled. Surround the young soul with nothing but licentiousness, and the result will be fatal ; place it in the midst of purity, impart to it knowledge, surround it by good examples, and such influences must be felt. It has been confided under our care, and the responsibility of its true culture rests chiefly upon us. Are we not loudly and imperatively called upon to do what we can ? Is it just, is it honorable, if we turn aside and neglect this great work ? Is it not a stirring thought, that the minds of others may sink into degradation through our neglect, or by our aid be raised into spiritual power ?

The greatest responsibility, in the spiritual culture of the young, rests upon the parents. They are the first protectors of the child. In their

hands has it been placed. They have the privilege of watching its earliest progress. And from them it should receive that guidance which will lead it to the highest good. "All thy children," says the prophet Isaiah, "shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace." And Moses, speaking to the people of Israel, says, with an earnestness suited to the importance of his injunction, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Herein we see the wisdom of that illustrious Prophet who looked upon his people with the affection of a father, desiring, with tender solicitude, to leave behind him a united, obedient, and happy nation. Thus, and thus alone, could they become truly wise and virtuous. There is a law among the Icelanders, by which, when a minor child commits an offence, the courts first make judicial inquiry whether his parents have given him a good education; and if it be proved they have not, the child is acquitted and the parents are punished. In the old Plymouth Colony there was a law touching the same point. There was much significance in this. Surely nothing is more

beautiful than the sympathies which connect parent and child, and nothing is more heartless than neglect ; and yet are there not those who toil for their children, but never pray for them ? who wish to see them fixed in their possessions, rather than in their principles ? Thank God, it is not always thus, and what can be more impressive than to see a cheerful and faithful parent looking with devout interest upon his child ?

But while parents have much to do, they are not alone responsible for the character of the child. We are all more or less interested, — the brother, the sister, the relative, the teacher, the friend, nay, even one who only meets children by the wayside and exchanges with them the fewest words, is in some measure accountable, and might with a little effort do much good. And no one has a right to trifle even with the slightest opportunity of being useful. Few can work out splendid achievements ; but that individual who unobtrusively pursues his way, and feels a quiet joy in dropping an appropriate word of rational instruction, who judiciously expresses sympathy, or utters his convictions in tones of virtuous persuasion, may do more in the course of his humble life, than another who endows hospitals, patronizes popular institutions, and blazes out into sudden acts of brilliant munificence. It is not a few

startling deeds which accomplish the most good, but the gentle spirit which pervades the life, and flows onward like a placid stream, not heard, or even seen, except by the more luxuriant verdure which marks its way. Every individual is doing something, intentionally or unintentionally, for others. Our lot is woven together. We each hold a thread that runs through many hands. The young are around us. We can often speak a word of counsel which will do much to ripen innocence to virtue, and encourage childhood to press forward in its inquiry after truth ; and in this connexion I would particularly allude to the poor.

The children of the poor have an especial claim upon our sympathy. There are the virtuous and the vicious poor ; let us think for a moment of the latter. Exposed to every danger, a moral pestilence raging around them, they are doomed, — yes, — doomed ! — unless we rescue them from their fearful peril. What can save them ? What cord is there by which they can trace their way out of the labyrinth of sin ? The atmosphere they breathe is polluted. The scenes they witness degrade and brutalize. Who would not rush in to avert such an evil ? Whose soul would not leap to snatch one young spirit from such perdition, and lead it to the feet of Christ ?

Is there one among the living who would not exert his powers in a work like this? Such questions I know have been asked before, but let them be asked again and again, till every Christian heart is alive, and Christian benevolence has done its whole work. It is true much is now doing among the poor, but much more must still be done to raise their moral character and impart a religious spirit. If the children of Christian parents need religious instruction, how much more do the children of the abandoned!

"The bud that was meant
For the summer-soft skies,
When left to wild winter
Unfoldeth and dies."

Here is certainly a most important sphere for a true spirit. Here may the philanthropist, the Sunday-school teacher, the visiter among the poor, find ample scope for their best efforts and highest powers. In this field of labor the Sunday-school assumes a most elevated character. It stands out as the friend of the neglected, the protector of innocence, the guardian of endangered souls. Sunday-schools for this class should increase, and those who are capable of being teachers should come in eagerly to the work. They should rejoice to lend their aid, and if not qualified, prepare themselves for the labor. A

louder cry than has yet been heard, must ring through the Christian church, and a holier spirit than has yet been felt must inspire it. We must glow with a purer zeal, we must live with a higher faith, we must labor with a more extended philanthropy. Then will all children receive moral and spiritual culture, and we may say of them, in the words of Jesus, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

In these introductory remarks there is another subject to which I would allude; the importance of physical culture. There is an intimate connexion between the physical and spiritual. Although they seem so distinct, God has seen fit to unite them. The body, as well as the mind, is subject to inviolable laws. An active mind may wear out a weak body, or a deranged body cloud the clearest mind. Those, who would have a sound mind, should have a sound body; and the soundness of the body depends much upon a proper observance of physical laws. Some may say, health and strength come from God; and this is true; but he gives us these, in the same manner that he gives the husbandman his harvest, on certain conditions. As the husbandman sows, so he will also reap, and in regard to the physical nature, if we would be strong we must

be discreet. A man may be very good, but his goodness will not prevent fire from burning, or water from drowning him or his children, if they rush heedlessly into either the one or the other. God loves the virtuous, but he does not make their life a series of peculiar miracles. If the rocks fall upon them they are crushed, if they drink hemlock they die. A generous heart will not prevent the need of a blanket, or the love of truth the necessity of a pair of shoes. Happiness depends much upon health; and health upon food, exercise, and the observance of organic laws; many violate these laws, and then charge God with that which is the consequence of their own neglect. They speak of a mysterious Providence, where they should speak of their own imprudence, and perhaps of their own folly. Look upon the delicate texture of a child's frame, notice its curious and complex workmanship, see how wonderful is this temple of mind, and remember how quickly the thread may be severed, or reflect upon the disease and imbecility which may be laid up in childhood for future time. The seeds of sickness and manifold infirmities may be then sown. I remember hearing a distinguished individual, who was suffering under physical weakness, say, that when he was a boy he was instructed concerning the solar system, and every other system, except his own system!

We may find, that a walk in the fresh air and a little active amusement will check peevishness and lead to contentment, sooner than any moral lecture, given in a hot room, against that which is not a fault of the will, but a natural consequence of violating the physical laws. Children are no doubt often, in this way, admonished and punished for that which is owing to neglect on the part of others. Nothing can be more useful or interesting, than the study of natural laws. As the light breaks in upon us, it seems like a revelation from heaven. Many things, which were painfully obscure, are made known, and our duty stands clearly before us. We see perfect order reigning through all God's universe. No chance, no blind fatality, no arbitrary will, but a consistent, harmonious system, binding all together, a perfect adaptation between our internal frame and the outward world, a heaven-created sympathy between body and mind. We find, that when the all-wise Creator fashioned his works, he did so upon certain principles, and that he gave us faculties by which we might study those principles, and conform ourselves to them. In the moral and spiritual culture, these great organic and physical laws should never be overlooked. There should be an harmonious development of the whole being, and physiology should be considered an essential branch of education. Prob-

ably no individual has done more, within the last century, to call attention to this subject, and clothe it with surpassing interest, than George Combe, whose invaluable works, as well as those of Dr. Combe, are indeed worthy of careful investigation. If we infringe the organic laws we do so at our peril, and every lover of man, every friend of the young, every worshipper of God, should strive to understand them. They are instituted by God for the wisest purpose, and what he has seen fit to establish we may think worthy of study.

Within the body is the mind, — the heavenly inmate, the immortal guest. When this cottage of clay shall have fallen, the indwelling spirit may ascend to the palaces of heaven. When this animal structure, this material frame-work shall be broken up, the imperishable LIFE will remain untouched. This has laws of its own. Material laws apply to the body, and spiritual laws to the spirit. When they separate, the one cleaves to earth, and the other soars to heaven. The soul has a vitality in itself. It has a universe around it, and a heaven above. Its home is on high, and therefore celestial laws apply to it, which cannot apply to that which is not absolute spirit. To bring out the soul in harmony with these laws is the high end of spiritual culture.

SONG OF THE ANGELS.

We have come, from the heaven of heavens, to see
What is veiled in profoundest mystery,
A living soul,
That will live while the endless ages roll!
A ray divine,
That may shine,
For ever and ever, in God's own sight,
Till its beams shall become like an ocean of light!
And before this being now
In reverential love we bow,
For in its mind
A miniature of God we find,
And with awe we would behold
This beauteous bud of heaven unfold.

See the infant cherub rest,
In joy upon its mother's breast,

While above,
She smiles into its eyes with love.
Mortal mother, guard him well,
Boundless powers within him dwell,
The blessed task to you is given,
To rear him for the courts of heaven,
Where he may stand,
With Gabriel at God's right hand!

But through life, where'er he goes,
He will meet with countless foes;
Mammon will before him hold
Hoards of silver and of gold;
Ambition will his thoughts inflame,
To part with Truth and toil for Fame;
Thus Demons, clothed like saints of light,
Will beckon him to shades of night,
Until with rust,
His crown may crumble into dust,
And all his noble powers within
Be blasted by the touch of sin!

Oh, mortal mother! guard him well,
Eternal hopes within him dwell.
In thy love
Point above,
And before Jehovah there
Teach him to pour forth his prayer,

And joy to know
He thus may conquer every foe.
For all the powers on earth combined
Cannot harm a prayerful mind!
Let thy heart
This truth impart,
That he may struggle on his way
Through Night and Chaos into day!

O God! what marvels we behold
Wrapped within this mortal fold!
Now, the child is small and weak,
Simplest words he cannot speak;
Soon he will with power be fraught,
Feeding on divinest thought!
Now the child is rocked to rest,
Meekly on a mother's breast;
Soon he will in manhood roam,
And the world will be his home!
Thus he may, from hour to hour,
Rise from weakness into power;
Studying out the Good and True
With Eternity in view,
Until at length,
He may put forth angelic strength!
Mortal mother! guard him well,
Godlike powers within him dwell.
Thy infant boy
May become a nation's joy;

Or, if humble be his sphere,
He will still to us be dear,
We will gladly watch above him,
And the God of Heaven will love him!

CHILDHOOD.

" Happy child! Thy cradle is to thee like infinite space. Become a man, and the great world will be too narrow for thee."

SCHILLER.

CHILDHOOD.

THERE is a feeling of general interest manifested towards children. They are the poetry of real life. A thousand playful ways arrest our attention and win our heart. Flowers are attractive, but, as they spring up and bloom, their beauty is ever the same. The violet, the lily, and the rose, are, this season, what they were the last, — they repeat themselves ; but with children there is always something new. Every child has some way peculiar to itself ; an individuality which takes us by surprise. When we look at children, we always wonder what they will do next. There is also an innocence about them which gains our respect. We can hardly think of them with suspicion. We acknowledge and feel their purity and goodness. The father gazes upon his child with honest joy, and the mother presses its hands in hers, or meets it with a loving caress, feeling that it is a gift of God, and

worthy to have come from the Great Giver. The wise forget their learning, and play and frolic before the new comer. The weakest rules the strongest. The infant rides upon wise men's shoulders, and makes them talk in its own language. Thus, before Innocence — Strength and Wisdom willingly yield, and the little child unconsciously prophesies what it may yet accomplish.

What can be a more interesting sight than to see a circle of admiring children around a smiling infant, while they, by their simple words, are eager to win one recognizing glance? What more striking, than to see the venerable grandsire forgetting the infirmities of age while he becomes the companion of youth? And who, that had the pencil of Raphael, or Angelo, and could hope to depict the blessed Jesus, would not, of all others, select that scene where he stood surrounded by his disciples, and, in answer to their earnest inquiries respecting who should be greatest, with godlike majesty and celestial tenderness, took a little child, and placed him in the midst of them, as the living type of a Christian's power?

There is a sympathy which warms us in the presence of the young. He must have a narrow heart who does not feel it. "Any man," it has been well said, "who has a proneness to see a

beauty and fitness in all God's works, may find daily food for his mind even in an infant." This sympathy is generally felt. It is manifested in an interest which is almost universal. It appeals to our gentler nature, and that nature answers in accents of love.

When we look upon a child, we see the miniature of humanity, — the very picture of our former selves. A thousand memories start up, and strange associations fill the mind. We live again in the past. Dim remembrances, like half-forgotten dreams, creep over the mind ; we seem looking over the very edge of time into a pre-existent state. Thus, in connexion with these sympathies, there is a powerful influence exerted by childhood, — an influence which tends to soften and humanize. It lifts us out of the dusty world. It imparts innocent joy. It awakens salutary reflections. It brings before us humanity surrounded by peculiar loveliness. We look, then, upon mind as upon a landscape over which hangs a golden haze. There is no hardness or sharpness of outline. Hope weaves bright visions of the Future. Imagination hovers around, and pictures the possibilities of coming events. All glows with sunny anticipation. The mother toils with a cheerful heart ; she watches in the lonely night ; she is subjected to drudgery by day ; yet

she meets all without a murmur, — nay, feels that the child, for whom she thus labors, is her choicest blessing. The father is filled with new power, while a noble purpose animates his mind. He thinks of his home, of the little prattlers who will climb his knee ; and with this thought his labors grow light. He cares not for toil, when he can toil for such an end. He becomes a better neighbour, a better citizen, a better man. Thus, peaceful homes are the safeguard of the republic, and children the guardian spirits of Humanity. These make a man love his country. They make him love life. They call out within him affections which were else unknown, and sympathies which bind him with holier ties to his race.

There is here, as elsewhere, a law of compensation, — a reaction of good. While we give, we gain ; while we instruct, we learn ; while we minister unto, we are ministered to. Children may call forth anxious thought and watchful care, and yet we love them, and suffer grievous loss if they are taken away. We feel that we are gainers by their presence ; that something of wisdom and purity flows from them to us, and that they are given, not only for our pleasure, but for our improvement.

Besides this influence, there are others more

indirect. We feel that we are bound to do what we can for their future welfare, and are reminded of a time when we shall have passed away, and they will be called to fill our places. The thought will be sad, but salutary. It is well for us to realize, that this is not our abiding place; that we have a higher end than can be attained in this world, though in this world we must prepare for it. Children, growing up, are our monitors. They warn us of flying time; and make us feel, with new force, a solemn truth, which should never be forgotten, that we are links between two generations, and that we must transmit all that has been given to us, and even more. Here is the replenishing of the world. Here is a new wave of existence. From these little children will be selected the judges and statesmen of the next half century. Thus are we the creators of a world's destiny. We are moulding the elements of coming society. Every generation is called to make its own impress upon days yet to come. And, by the removal of one generation, and the coming forward of another, Humanity may receive perpetual renovation. The mature become fixed in their views; old prejudices fasten around them, and are rivited to their souls. New minds come; and why may not these inherit the virtues, without the vices of their

sires ? God offers the world fresh opportunities. The gates of the past close ; the gates of the future open. If Wisdom and Love were all that passed through, the world were indeed blessed. In children, a new Humanity holds out its hand. When will mankind bequeath to it only what is good ? We take one race, and score them all over with errors ; then God seems, in his kindness, to say, " Here is a new race, — begin once more." Oh, when shall we begin wisely ? In proportion as we look upon children in connexion with the future, and are true to our duty, we shall ourselves be benefited by the presence of the young. A feeling of responsibility will impress our minds ; an honest and high-minded regard for the future, and a sincere interest in the transmission of truth to those who will presently fill our places.

We have thus far spoken of the general interest manifested in children, and of good influences indirectly exerted over us by them. Let us now consider some of their peculiar characteristics.

Childhood is obviously the season of sensation. It but seldom reasons abstractly. It observes. It notices facts. Its thoughts are excursive. Scientific and vigorous investigations are the result of future development. Still, even in childhood,

we may notice the studious look, the expression of mute wonder. These are the foreshadowings of what will be. Young thoughts, quickly on the wing, sometimes repose in silent contemplation. Nature and visible things are the general objects of attention ; but even the young seem, at times, to cast a piercing glance into the mysteries of life, its meaning and destiny. Still, the young mind is mostly moved by objects of sense. The child has a threefold nature, — the physical, the intellectual, and the moral. The physical is active from the first ; afterwards we may see the dawning of the intellectual and the moral. The physical nature is beautifully adapted to its purposes, but, like the others, it needs guidance. It is principally from this, that sensation proceeds ; and sensation alone may impart exquisite joy, and fill the young being with a pleasing consciousness of existence. The harmonious action of the physical organs may delight a child, and it may thus, without any other source of pleasure, be full of delight, in the mere action of the bodily frame.

In connexion with this characteristic, and growing out of it, children are naturally active. There is a marked restlessness, even in infancy. A child is seldom still ; and, as it advances in age, activity will increase. Nature seems to abhor

idleness. All her works are in motion, from the growing plant to the revolving planet. And this love of motion belongs to the child. Who has not wondered at the inexhaustible impulses of the young, — at their unwearied activity? Full of spirit, they will run and frolic in very wantonness. Left to themselves, they will find ample employment. No men of business could be more industrious than are children, in carrying out their various plans. Full of life, they wish to labor. With indefatigable zeal they toil against petty obstacles. With breathless ardor they struggle on, firm against despair. Now, a fortification of snow, and now, a row of bricks; first the kite, and then the ball, calls forth youthful skill. To-day, the knife is busy in carving a lilliputian boat, and to-morrow it must be launched, and watched with eager gaze as it floats triumphantly over the water. The activity of children is unceasing, and from this flows both health and pleasure.

And here we come to another characteristic, which is, the spontaneous happiness of childhood. Happiness is a natural element in the human mind. The young soul is full of instinctive and irresistible joy. Remove positive pain, — take away absolute hindrances, and the young soul of itself looks forth with a smile, and feels that it is blessed to exist. Go to the most wretched

hovel in a thronged city, and there, amid penury, you shall hear the clear laugh of the child, and in a few pebbles or straws a source of amusement will be found. In the very almshouse and jail, children will find much to enjoy ; and where old age sits with care-worn face, the child will look around with laughing eyes ; and if it should weep, it will soon again mingle smiles with its tears. I have watched a pale, deformed child, in the midst of poverty, and have seen that, even under circumstances so adverse, there were sources of native pleasure, drawn from one could hardly tell what. The light of the fire, the very shadows on the wall, seem to minister somewhat of joy. Happiness may spin its thread from the most meagre material, and make it shine like the rays of the sun ; nay, as a silk-worm, it may weave its web even out of itself.

We have spoken of the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature, and have said, that the physical is active from the first, and that, afterwards, we may see the dawning of the intellectual and the moral. We believe that this dawning takes place sooner than is generally imagined ; that the first rays of both may be seen in the early day-break of life, and in connexion with the spontaneous joy of which we have spoken, they have their place. One of the first pleasures of

the child grows out of love ; and in the earliest achievements of the young we can see the workings of thought. The pleasures of childhood are drawn from the *mind*. What is that curiosity, which is one of the first traits of childhood, but the inquisitiveness of Mind ? It sees an effect, — it is restless to know the cause. It must see into every thing. The whistle must be broken, that its construction may be scrutinized. The most exquisite plaything must sooner be destroyed, than any thing about it remain a secret. So, with the amusements of children, — are they not full of invention ? Do they enjoy any thing better than to manifest or discover design ?

Again, — children are fond of the humorous : and here is the operation of thought. They detect resemblances ; they quickly catch at the ludicrous ; they laugh at wit ; they have jokes of their own. Here is often manifested a quicker and more complex movement of the mind than would at first be supposed. The mind must see the resemblance, and the difference ; there must be the swift glance of thought, and then comes the pleasure. Rapid as light the movement, and yet full of joy to the young mind. One of the very pleasures that young children feel from infant ballads which are filled with absurd images, is, that they see the absurdity, and the very folly is a source of amusement.

There is another characteristic of childhood, which is not a little remarkable. I allude to its dramatic power. You may often overhear a child carrying on a dialogue with itself. The girl talks perhaps to her doll, in the capacity of a mother, and then gives appropriate answers. A lad, perhaps, carries on a trade with another, and you hear question and reply. I knew a boy who had an imaginary companion, with whom he drove hoop, and a bystander, if blindfolded, might have thought there were two at play. This trait of character, when we analyze it, is certainly wonderful. The mind goes out of itself. It acts in two persons. The movement is complex, and yet it is a spontaneous act. More may be said of this under the head of Imagination. For the present we will pass to the moral and spiritual powers.

The intellectual and the moral powers are distinct. The intellect may be cultivated and the moral left to grow wild, or decay like a root in the dust. The intellect may expand, and grow brilliant in its vigor, while every moral feeling moulders within. The culture of the intellect is not enough. It never was enough. The deadliest foes of virtue have often had keen wit. Men of profound thought have at times been men of desperate wickedness, and some, who could

breathe in accents of angelic sweetness, have kindled the worst of passions. The culture of the intellect is not the highest culture. It is not even of necessity a good. It may prove, and often has proved, a curse, it needs to be baptized in the pure fountain of eternal love, to be sanctified by purity of sentiment and rectitude of will, to be enlightened and governed by the spiritual powers. It is an interesting fact, that from the very first, the moral powers may be developed in harmony with the intellectual. Children may understand much of veracity, benevolence, justice, duty ; they may enjoy the consciousness of doing right, and, in the spirit of worship, may look upward to God and adore. There are in children religious capabilities which will respond to a proper appeal. The spirit of God often moves in the depths of a child's heart, and, when swept by this divine breath, the young affections vibrate. The powers of the soul stretch themselves forth for nourishment and support. They need God. They ask for Him. Love, and Reverence, and Faith all stand to be led to the celestial throne. The child may conform its life to the will of God. The child may kneel in grateful and earnest prayer, and thus may it embody in itself the principles of good, and grow in life, and light, and purity. If the religious sentiments were thus called forth,

might not the child, from its earliest youth, become a child of God? Might it not unfold, in the beauty of holiness, harmoniously as a flower unfolds in the sun? Children, if neglected, will grow up in error. They are not immaculate. They are weak, they are ignorant. They need guidance; guidance is indispensable. They have a power to do good, they have also a power to do evil. They have a spiritual nature, they have also an animal nature; one or the other will have the mastery. And what a fearful difference will it make if the lower enslaves the higher. If the body becomes the jail of the soul, and the appetites tyrannize over the spirit. There must be guidance. Human nature demands it. There must be culture. This is absolutely necessary if we would bring out the deeper and finer affections of the soul. The acorn might slumber for ever, under the brown earth, were it not for the sun and rain; and so is it with the seeds of God's planting; they have in them, through Him, immortal vitality, but they need a foreign power to aid in their development.

EARLY DAYS.

Who, for all that age could bring,
Would forget life's budding spring?
Hours of frolic! schoolboy days!
Full of merry pranks and plays;
When the untaught spirit beats
With a thousand wild conceits;
And each pleasure, bright and new,
Sparkles fresh with heavenly dew;—
Who, in after toil and strife,
Would forget the morn of life?

Maturer age brings riper thought,
  Fills with nobler hopes the mind,
Seeks the truth by prophets sought,
  Toils to benefit mankind;—
Yet who, 'mid all that age can bring,
Would forget life's budding spring?

* * * *

New-born minds, untouched by sin,
Make the earth seem holy ground;
Thus the innocence within
Sheds its light on all around,
Till the hills, and flowers, and streams,
Are woven o'er with golden dreams.
How oft in youth I wandered out,
With bounding step and merry shout,
Running and leaping in the sun,
With heart brim full of joy and fun,
Till by degrees my eye grew mild,
And I became less gay and wild,
And every thing, by nature wrought,
Awakened me to calmer thought,
And my young spirit, unaware,
Seemed lifted on the wings of prayer.

* * * *

How oft beneath the shadow's dim,
I sat beside the fountain's brim,
Watching the wild-wood flowers which there
Breathed their sweet perfume to the air,
And saw each dew-bent blossom shine
With something of a light divine!
How oft I watched with thoughtful eye,
The clouds that slowly wandered by,
Amid an atmosphere of blue,
With pearl, and rose, and amber hue,
And felt, as thus they went abroad,
They were the messengers of God!

And when, upon the river's side,
I saw the silver waters glide ;
While my school-mate, half in play,
Watched the tranquil current flow,
And sought to draw the speckled prey,
From its native home below ;
How often have I felt the sight
Fill my whole being with delight,
While waves below, and clouds above,
Stirred my young heart to holy love !

* * * *

Then each scene, before me brought,
Did unfold some inward thought ;
Happy moments ! golden hours !
Pure and blessed joys of youth !
Then I felt those inward powers,
That now pant for highest truth !
Not for all that age can bring
Would I forget life's budding spring !

THE GROWTH OF THE MIND.

"I feel a strange emotion of curiosity about this little life, in which I am setting out on such a progress."

JOHN FOSTER.

"May I return from external things, to those that are within myself, and from these, again rise, to those that are of a more exalted nature."

ST. BERNARD.

THE GROWTH OF THE MIND.

THE infant soul has always been considered a problem difficult satisfactorily to solve. Its nature, and the principles of its growth, have long been a matter of discussion. No subject has caused greater divisions in the Christian Church. Some have maintained that it is totally depraved, some that it comes from God unsullied as a ray of light, while others argue that it is capable of good or evil, and in its choice is left morally free. Among Philosophers also have been clashing opinions. Some have considered the mind at first as a blank to be written upon from without; — an empty cup into which thought must be poured. Others, that there are inherent powers, innate capabilities, internal laws, a native consciousness of right and wrong; — that spirit has in itself a principle of life which must unfold from within. Whichever views are right, these differing opinions have caused dissension, and thrown

their varied hues upon the literature of the world. The remarkable language of Christ, in regard to childhood, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," has not yet led men to agree. The subject is an important one, and any thing which will tend to solve the problem will throw light upon human nature, and give a truer view of that Divine Being in whose image man was made.

The importance of just views upon this subject we presume no one will question. They are views concerning the highest work of Almighty Power. The external world is but a platform for the free action of the Spirit. To it the material creation is as a shadow. It is the masterpiece of the Most High. It bears His likeness. To it, as to naught else, he says, "My child." No theme in natural history, or classic lore, can equal this in depth and significance. It is, above all others, a subject for investigation and thought.

And if this subject is important, is it not also interesting? What more wonderful than to behold the phenomenon of a new soul; — to watch its first unfoldings. In after life we may see bright signs of progress, new epochs in its experience, but never its beginnings, its first thoughts, and impressions, and impulses. Who would not watch with interest a Milton or a Shakspeare, if they could be brought to us as babes, and be left

to ripen under our eye. Yet many, no doubt, saw them thus, and looked upon them with no peculiar interest. Little children, very likely, carried them in their arms, and played with them as if they were mere dolls. Gradually were they taught the first words of speech, by slow degrees did they ascend from weakness to power. And yet in how few years did those infants make the earth a new world! Their kindling words roused life in a million hearts. What a knowledge would that be which could clearly understand the entire process of such growth! It is true we may not see many such spirits as these, yet how can we tell that the very child upon which we look may not be one? And if the child before us should not here rise to such eminence, it is still a Spirit, with a whole universe around it, and eternal existence before. It is a new soul sent to work out a new destiny; to battle with coming events; to grow grim and ghastly before the hot breath of sin, or to shine in star-like beauty among the spirits of the just. A new soul; and, whatever may be its station here, it may be more illustrious, in heaven, than those who are considered greatest in the councils of men. And let it be remembered that in childhood we are permitted to see the beginning. If there are angels who have not visited the earth, though they may see souls here-

after, yet, if they cannot see childhood, then they behold not the day-break of Being. The first dawning of mind is hid from them. What a privilege might such deem it to come down, and watch that new sight, unconscious infancy! The soul in its bud. To trace thence each unfolding affection, each expanding thought. This sight, whether seen by angels or not, is seen by us; is it not a sight to awaken interest?

What then is to be done? How are we to become acquainted with mind? With its nature and the principles of its growth? The problem is before us, how can we solve it? First, we should begin by laying aside all theories, and go to the mind itself for the study of facts. We should not try to make every thing bend to favorite, preconceived opinions, but study what can be absolutely known.

Remember the disputants who spent weeks in arguing why it was, that, if a vessel were filled to the brim with water and then a fish introduced, the water would not run over. They argued and theorized. They passed from reason to reason, until finally, bewildered by their own speculations, they exclaimed, Let the experiment be tried. The vessel was accordingly filled, the fish solemnly introduced, and behold their fact became a fancy! With breathless anxiety they had been

laboring to unravel a false proposition, and taxed their wisdom to explode a whim. Many have thus theorized upon childhood and the soul. They have followed out their own theories, and neglected to study nature.

But is it easy to see for ourselves, and arrive at a just result? In the first place it is spirit we are to study, and this is not seen by the senses. Mind must be understood by mind. In the next place no mind exhibits itself in its wholeness at once. We behold, at any given moment, but one glimpse, and the same powers manifest themselves under different circumstances in different degrees, and in different combinations with other powers; besides this, every child has its individuality, somewhat like others and yet somewhat different. The knowledge of one manifestation of mind will not give a complete knowledge of human nature, any more than one expression of face would give a knowledge of all expressions. Every individual has some peculiarity, and children also have their characteristics. To know then the truth concerning the nature and growth of the soul we should watch it under varied circumstances, should see it in different individuals, and seek wisely to call forth its powers.

To call forth its powers. This is the most important point of all, and the most difficult.

This ability is indeed a rare gift. It is possessed by few, for few make any effort to possess it. "We have heard," some will exclaim, "much about the spiritual thoughts of children, but it is all a dream, we have tried it and could get nothing from them." And it is no doubt true that they have tried; they have perhaps asked careless, or formal questions, — but it is not every key that will unlock the casket. To cross-question a child mechanically, in order to find out its spiritual views, is like dissecting a bird to find the song it sings. The deepest feelings of all minds are generally most concealed. We instinctively shield them from observation. Thus, while we can tell, from the occasional questions and remarks of children, what glimpses they are getting of great truths, what longings stir at times their young hearts, yet few are the persons who can lead the spirit out, and converse, as it were face to face, with its deepest nature. As in the Arabian tale, no giant power, no armed force, could break open the gates of the cavern; while one particular word, though spoken in a whisper, would cause them to roll back; so with the infant mind. Mere curiosity cannot gratify its desire. To Kindness, Spirituality, and Truth, the privilege alone belongs. They only bear the golden key that can open this Treasury of the Lord.

How many in advanced life find it difficult to do justice to their own thoughts. They can follow out trains of reasoning and come to conclusions which they can very inadequately express in words. When we remember this we can hardly expect that the young should in words do full justice to their thoughts, or that we, without some wisdom on our part, should be able to understand their minds.

What then is most requisite in order to understand a child's mind? May we not reply, that we should be childlike. There must be some affinity between us and the child. To understand the sympathies of the young, we must be able easily to enter into their feelings. It has been said, by a distinguished philosopher, that the great characteristic of genius was to carry the feelings of childhood into the maturity of riper years, and what the philosopher has described as the requisite of true genius, the Saviour has declared is the requisite of the true Christian; "Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Jesus then has said that we should all be like little children, having their freshness, simplicity, and love. This is one secret of true greatness and goodness, and it is a characteristic almost essential to a free intercourse with the

young mind. When we have this, sternness and stiffness pass away, and we meet the child with love, our conversation sparkles with life, and a natural frankness, on our part, elicits a natural frankness in return, heart approaches heart, they meet and embrace. A person with such feelings may know more of a child's mind in one day than others in a year.

This spirit on our part will lead to simple and appropriate topics of conversation. Nice technicalities will not be sought, neither shall we sink into frivolities or vapid commonplace. There may be richness, and raciness, and even depth. There may even be profoundness if there is clearness also. Children may know little of any long course of reasoning, and yet they may know what is reasonable. They may not have that power of reason which traces, step by step, elaborate intricacies, and yet have a power which sees and apprehends.

There may be two faults in our intercourse with children, — using complicated words and thus straining their minds, or resorting to such superficial nonsense that they instinctively shrink away. Young minds often make more demand upon reason than we expect. They ask for good sound thought in simple language. We may take the very highest truths if we will only give them

clear expression, and to the highest truths, simply expressed, the young mind will most quickly respond. Children wish to be intelligently dealt with. They have thought, they have discrimination, and they know far more, than many an inconsiderate bystander would believe. We should therefore select natural and appropriate themes; and, if we strike the right vein, even a child's mind may discover precious ore.

There is also another thought, which it is well to bear in mind, — that there may be powers slumbering within the soul not yet aroused. Many are greatly skeptical on this point, they look at the child's diminutive form, they hear some trifling remarks, and judge that there is nothing beneath. But if we reason by analogy we cannot come to such a conclusion. We know that the boy is an embryo man. And if, in looking upon a seed or bulb, we have faith in the tree or flower, why should we not, as reasonably, have faith that powers are yet wrapped up in the spirit and are waiting for some favorable influence to call them forth? External nature is full of slumbering energies. Gigantic powers are reposing in all the kingdoms of the material world, which, at the bidding of man's inventive faculty, start into life, and work in accordance with his will. They may sleep for centuries, yet at the voice of Genius they come

forth and perform their mighty achievements. Look upon water, how peaceful it seems! Who would suspect there was any wonderful force sleeping there? Bring fire, and behold that thin mist which gently rises and passes away. Who would imagine there was force there? Yet give that thin vapor wise direction, and, with terrible energy, it flies over the land bearing ponderous masses in its swift career; or, against wind and tide, it ploughs with superhuman majesty the surges of the deep! — Thus in the material world there is more than meets the eye. Slumbering powers are all around us, and by analogy we should suppose this might be as true of spirit as of matter. And does not History prove that it is so? Do we not read of many who in after life have become distinguished, and yet who for years exhibited no sign of what was to follow? Claude, the great artist, of whom Sir Joshua Reynolds said, that "the world might sooner expect to see another Raphael than another Claude," was, until late in life, wholly unconscious of his great powers." When at school he was considered very dull, and from school he was apprenticed to a pastry cook. In after life he was hired by Augustine Trasso to grind colors and do household drudgery, at which time the productions of his master, and the paintings in the gal-

leries of Rome, awakened within him powers, which, until this time, had slumbered, but which were now destined to astonish the world. Had Claude died in middle life, he would have died a pastry cook; while now, his name is revered by all artists, and his paintings are the pride of kings. It seemed a mere circumstance which called out his powers at that late period of life; yet the powers were there, and would have been, had they never been called out. And how do we know what energies are slumbering in minds around us? How do we know what powers slumber in the child? Many instances might be mentioned as remarkable as that of Claude, establishing the same principle, but this is sufficient to show what prodigious ability may exist in the mind, where no one around knows it, and when even the individual himself does not.

In order, then, to meet the child aright, we should have faith in its yet undeveloped powers. In proportion as we are deficient in this, our intercourse with a child will be irksome. The mind often opens by slow degrees; the faculties that may be there are often late in developing. As in some places wells have been dug which seemed to lead to nothing but sand and clay, till, when almost tempted to abandon the work, one more pressure of the spade, and the water has

gushed up like a river ; so at times with the young we may converse and labor, and feel for a season that all is dry and barren, but by and by we may strike the spring, and living waters will burst forth with unexpected freshness.

We have thus far spoken of the nature and growth of mind, in relation to the importance and interest of the subject, the difficulty of arriving at satisfactory results, and we have also dwelt upon some things requisite in order properly to pursue the investigation. If we would in this way study the child's mind, we should gain an insight into the greatest of God's works, and hold nearer communion with God himself. Is it not strange that, while the kingdoms of nature have been studied with indefatigable industry, and the minutest fact has been carefully recorded, the infant soul, in its early history, should have so seldom been studied methodically ? Are there not those who feel that there is little or nothing in it to be studied ? who look upon childhood with the eye of sense, but lack the perception of the spirit ?

Surely no one need be indifferent to the history of a soul. Who would not watch with sacred interest its gradual growth ? Entering upon an unending career, how feeble is its beginning ! Is not a child the very personification of helplessness ? Superior to all the animal creation in its

destiny, it is weaker than all at its origin. It can do less for its own safety, is more slow in progress, and more deficient in instinct. Look upon the infant : Let your soul be moved by love till the emotion shines through your countenance ; then, as spirit appeals to spirit, you will see, by mysterious recognition, that young soul beam with a kindred life. An infant's smile ! how simple in itself, how profound in its meaning !

From this first smile might we go on observing the growth of the intellectual and moral being, watching each progressive step as it ascends in the scale of existence, until it lays aside its garment of flesh, and mounts to heavenly glory.

The soul is born, — it lives, — it passes away. What is it which thus comes and goes ? Who would not lift the veil which hangs over the philosophy of mind ? To do so we must follow it from its early dawn through its gradual development.

THE SOUL.

> "It is most true that eyes are formed to serve
> The inward light; and that the heavenly part
> Ought to be king."
>
> SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

THE spot which seems most desolate to Sin,
To Virtue's eye is like an Eden fair;
The outward world takes hue from that within,
The blessing, or the curse, is centred there!

As the bright sun, by gazing on a cloud,
Fills each dark fold with showers of golden light,
So when affliction's storms are beating loud,
Will one great thought make all around seem bright.

The soul does its own life to nature give,
Its tranquil beauty, or its fearful gloom,
And thus as in Elysium we may live,
Or in the depths of darkness fix our doom.

Deeper than ocean is its boundless love;
Higher than heaven its aspirations rise;
Swift, on the wings of thought, it soars above,
And with far-spreading pinion sweeps the skies.

In holy trust, and with a faith sublime,
It may pursue the path by angels trod,
Taste joys immortal while it lives in Time,
And hold mysterious intercourse with God!

When Truth's pure beams around its pathway shine,
A present heaven will dwell within the breast,
The kindling soul will glow with life divine,
And earth become like mansions of the Blest.

Yet may the soul its honors cast away,
And change for weakness its celestial might,
Turn from the splendor of Eternal Day,
And dash to earth its glorious crown of light!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY

OF NEWBURYPORT.

1835.

"True piety has in it nothing weak, nothing sad, nothing constrained. It enlarges the heart; it is simple, free, and attractive."

FENELON.

"There do remain, dispersed in the soil of human nature, divers seeds of goodness, of benignity, of ingenuity, which, being cherished, excited, and quickened by good culture, do, by common experience, thrust out flowers very lovely, and yield fruits very pleasant of virtue and goodness."

BARROW.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

THERE is probably nothing at the present time which awakens greater gratitude in the hearts of the devout, than the increasing interest that is felt for the instruction of the young. That we may all be true to our trust, should be our earnest prayer. Let us consider the importance of religious instruction, the capacity of the child to receive it, and the duties which necessarily follow.

We shall start from this point, — that the true education is the religious education.

It is this which acts upon the mind with reference to the direct object for which God created it. It is this which will lead the mind to the true happiness of life, — the happiness of virtue, which is superior to outward misfortunes. It is this which best fits the individual for society, and will enable him to do good among his fellow-

creatures. It is this which will prepare him both for the life which now is, and that which is to come.

The true education, then, is the religious education ; and every other kind of education should have reference to this, and act through and upon it. Others are good in their respective places, but this is good in all places ; and its true value, and its beneficial influence upon the various faculties of the mind, are not yet fully understood.

The religious principle should guide and govern the intellect. The religious principle should be the first developed ; for it will quicken the mental powers, check the passions, and keep that proper balance of character, without which a mind is ever liable to be misled.

The religious education, then, should be looked upon as the most important, by every parent and teacher. With it, all other education is good ; without it, all is empty.

But it may be asked, — What is religious education ? — what do we mean by it ? It is giving a just sense of duty. It is opening the eyes of the soul to the great purpose of life. It is awakening a love for truth. It is teaching a child to govern his mind aright, and search for the good. It is not giving him words, so much as thoughts ; not mere maxims, but living principles ;

not teaching him to be honest because honesty is the best policy, but to be honest because to be honest is right. It is teaching him to love the good, for the sake of the good ; to be virtuous in his actions, because he is so in his heart ; to have a supreme love for God, not from fear, but from the love of his perfect character.

We have thus seen, that the true education is the religious, and that the religious education is that which teaches purity, love, and devotion.

Now, are children capable of receiving such instruction ? Are they prepared for it ?

I believe they are. I believe that children may possess a true Christian spirit, that they may live true Christian lives, and that they may feel the force of great Christian truths. In order to see whether this be so, let us look at the nature of the child, and the nature of religion, and see how far they correspond. What is necessary to make a Christian ? Love, Faith, and Spirituality.

Now let us look into the mind of a child, and see if it have these elements of character. I believe it has, in a greater degree than the adult. I say the elements. They are not, it is true, yet formed into any systematic character ; but the elements of Love, and Faith, and Spirituality are, it seems to me, among the peculiar characteristics of childhood.

Certainly love dwells in the mind of a child. All children love, and love to be loved, — and their love is ever active. We do not say that the child loves alone what is good ; it is sufficient to say that it loves, and that it is capable of loving good, — and if it does not always do so, there is the more necessity of proper instruction. It can love, and does love ; and misanthropy in a child was never heard of. Love is the prime element of its nature, — the very life of its infant being ; and in this we have one of the most necessary elements of religion.

Faith grows out of love ; and a child has as much faith as it has love. A child never mistrusts till disappointment and deception have taught it to do so. A child does not naturally doubt. Credulity is proverbial in children. It is for men to be skeptics ; children never are. Gain a child's love, and you will see his faith ; and here is another element of the Christian character.

But further. A child not only has love and faith, but has also, in a remarkable degree, the elements of the spiritual. It has a love for the unseen, and a faith in it. Children are always, or almost always, fond of the supernatural. Who can read fairy tales like a child ? Who can believe the tales of the Arabian Nights like a child ? Who can fear haunted places like a child ? Who

can tremble at a ghost-story like a child? Who can conjure up spirits in the dark like a child? And all these show that it has the elements of the spiritual; for the love of the marvellous arises in the child from that part of its nature, which, wisely directed, would lead it to the spiritual. It has a love for the unseen, and a belief in the unknown. There is a spirit within the child which craves something superior to the senses. There is a sublime spiritual instinct, which God has implanted in its very nature. Perhaps no child, of itself, ever doubted that Daniel was preserved in the lion's den, or that the waters of the Red Sea were divided by the rod of Moses. A child feels that there is an unseen and omnipotent power always at work. The unfolding of a leaf is a marvel; in it the wonderful workmanship of God is visible, and through it His presence is felt. He feels that God could cause Lazarus to rise from the dead, as easily as he causes a tree to blossom in spring. The elements of the spiritual nature are within him, and he has spiritual faith. Here, then, we see that the elements of love, faith, and spirituality, — the elements of mind necessary to form a religious character, — exist in the child.

It may now be asked, — But can they understand? Perhaps they cannot; and perhaps an adult cannot. It is one thing to understand, and

another to have a rational faith. We cannot comprehend limitless space, but we may believe in it; and it is easier to believe in it than not to believe in it. We can believe in the spiritual, the mysterious, and the infinite, as firmly and as rationally as if we could grasp them with the understanding. We have a consciousness within which makes us more than understand; — we know. We believe, because we cannot help believing. The sun may be reflected in a drop of dew; so within the child may shine the image of the Eternal, and its young mind may comprehend, though in a less degree, the same truths which are cherished by the archangels.

There are laws of nature, and laws of spirit. The one is seen, and the other is felt; and the one is as reasonable as the other; and the child knows this as well as the adult. Eternal truth and the eternal principle in the soul have a resemblance; and the great I AM, that dwells in the soul of the child, bears witness to the truth. For instance, there is no more important point in religion than the belief in the omnipresence of God; and the child may feel this, as well as the philosopher; for every philosopher is imperfect, and may reason partly upon false premises, while the child goes to the truth at once. It has an innate consciousness given it by God himself, — which

is the highest kind of reason, darting as it does from cause to effect, and leaping from finite to infinite. Perhaps the advanced Christian, in his devotions, does not feel the immediate presence of Deity more sensibly than a child ; and we may all remember, when we repeated the Lord's prayer at our mother's knee, that our mother seemed scarce nearer to us than the Father of all.

We hear parents and others frequently remark, that it is difficult to talk with a child upon spiritual subjects. We cannot believe that the difficulty rests with the child. Let a person who would express his views on such subjects have spiritualized his own thoughts, and feel within himself what he wishes to express, and the child will soon sympathize with his views. The elements of a child's nature are similar to those of the adult ; and it has this advantage, — it has not been long enough in the world to have formed so many material associations, and therefore it can feel more sympathy in the spiritual world than in distant countries of the material world. It will understand more about heaven, than it does about China or Japan ; and feel the existence of angels as more probable than the existence of Hottentots. I believe that it is entirely a mistake, that children cannot feel an interest in spiritual things. The difficulty is, that they are seldom talked to on such subjects, in a simple and spiritual way.

I will mention one or two little facts, — which are only a few out of many I have gathered from intercourse with children. They serve to illustrate the thoughts that naturally spring up in the minds of the young. Several weeks since, I saw two boys looking at the figure of a child with his hands and face raised upwards. I asked them what they had been thinking of while they looked at it. At first they hung down their heads, and were silent; but when I asked them again, the oldest answered, — "I thought he wanted to go up, and could n't." I then asked the other; and he said, — "I thought he was looking up, and waiting for the angels to come down and take him." An adult would probably have said, it was a stand to set a lamp on, — which was in fact the case.

Last winter I visited a sick girl, about ten years old, whose mother was quite poor. The child was not expected to live. She frequently talked to me of heaven, and told me how she felt about meeting the angels. One day she asked, if those who could not sing here could sing when they arose. I told her perhaps they might. She said she could not sing, but hoped she should then be able. At another time, she asked about Elijah's translation, and said she did not see what he could do with his body in heaven; — and at another

time she asked me, with beautiful childlike simplicity, whether angels could hear prayer. I said I did not know, but perhaps some of them could. She said, — "My father was shipwrecked five winters ago, and always, when I say my prayers, I feel as if he could hear me." Thus was her mind filled with spiritual thoughts, and thus had she peopled heaven with affectionate beings, and felt it so near, that even her father might listen to her. I might give other instances of a similar character, to show the thoughts that naturally spring up in the minds of the young; but you will all probably remember similar instances.

I will mention some answers given by a school of poor children, on the subject of conscience. "What," said I, "is conscience?" One answered, — "A voice within." "Is it within every one?" Some said, — "Yes," and some, — "No." Those who said, No, were requested to hold up their hands. They were then asked whose minds this voice was not within. Some said, — "An infant's." I then asked, when it began to be there. They were puzzled. At length one said, — "When it begins to think, and know things." Some still held up their hands; and when asked what they had to say, a girl replied, — "I do not think that conscience is within the mind of the very wicked, — and when they

grow quite bad, it dies." A boy then held up his hand and said, — "I do not think it dies, but that it goes to sleep, — and that at last it always wakes up, and punishes a person worse than before." Part of an illustration was then drawn, and they were requested to fill it out. "If Life is like a voyage, and the Bible like the compass, what is conscience like?" One boy said, — "Like the rudder;" and another said, — "More like the pilot." These questions and answers were unpremeditated; and many of the children were from very poor and depraved families, — and they frequently show, when questioned, a like instinctive knowledge of the intricate principles of the human mind. These are not solitary instances. I mention them merely as a sample of many; and they show what elements are at work in the soul of a child.

With regard to religious feelings, I have known many children who have exhibited them in a great degree; who at the point of death have been willing to die, and have talked of heaven with delight. I knew one who requested that her companions might be gathered about her bed; and she there divided among them her playthings, and calmly told them of her trust in God, and her willingness to depart. I knew another little girl, whose parents were wretchedly poor, and

whose father was intemperate and profane. One day, when he was swearing, the little girl went up to him with an imploring look, and said, — "Oh! do n't speak such words; our Father in heaven won't love you, if you do!" Another day, when he talked so, the little creature knelt silently down in a corner, and prayed.

It may now be asked, — If children have this turn of mind, and these elements of character, and are thus capable of religious knowledge, and religious feeling, why do they not show more of it? I answer, — they are young; and while young, God has made them to be taught, and they are too generally taught wrong; their spiritual nature is neglected, — their religious character left for a future time, and there is too frequently a false system in their instruction.

Children are taught to act from low motives; — to fear punishment, rather than wrong; to love praise, rather than virtue; and thus rather to appear, than to be, good. They are injured both by precept and example; not intentionally, but through carelessness and thoughtlessness. A Christian visiter calls; and the first thing is to pamper the vanity of the child, and lead it to fix its mind on dress or outward show.

Children have quick perceptions. They often know what is going on in the mind of another.

The father says, — "My boy, love your Bible;" and the boy sees the father read a newspaper with twice the avidity that he ever saw him read the word of God. What is the result? The example of the parent goes farther than the precept. The father says, — "My son, love prayer;" but he never sees the father at family worship; he never knows him to pray. What is the result? The example of the parent goes farther than his precept. The parent says, — "Pray with reverence;" but during the time of prayer, in the house of worship, he lounges thoughtlessly, and seems to feel little interest in that solemn service. What is the result? This example, like the others, sinks deep, — and the example outweighs the precept.

Is it still asked, — If children have the elements of love, and faith, and spirituality, and are capable of acquiring religious character, why do they not show more of it? I point to things as they are; — they will answer. I point even to Christian parents; — they will show. Do they not generally treat the spiritual nature of the child with neglect? Do they not think more of its outward, than of its religious condition? Do they not think more how it will appear in the opinion of men, than in the opinion of God? Let these questions be fairly answered, and I think the

whole matter will be explained. For my own part, considering the counteracting influences of society, I wonder that children are so spiritual as they are. In my intercourse with the children of the vicious poor, I have often seen an artlessness and purity of character, which has surprised me, — an artlessness perhaps greater than among many children of better parents ; and this has convinced me that there must be something wrong, at the very root of domestic religious instruction, in many Christian families. The truth is, a child learns, both by seeing and hearing ; and if the parent is not consistent, the inconsistency works in the heart of the child, till it doubts whether much of virtue is not mere talk. He fathoms the depth of their morality, and finds it shallow ; and this shallowness serves to make him skeptical with regard to all morality, — and he thus becomes blind to the real beauty of holiness. The parent, then, should have a unity of character, — a singleness of purpose. His profession and his practice should never clash. The virtues which he wishes the child to acquire, should shine forth in his own example.

There are two kinds of parental affection ; one, the animal, and the other, the spiritual. The first is alike common to parents, and to brutes. It is instinctive — and neither animal nor man

can throw it aside, or deserve the least praise for having it. The other affection, the spiritual, is peculiar to the human race. It is higher and nobler. It distinguishes the soul from the body; it is that which cares for the spiritual welfare. Many parents have only the animal affection for their offspring, and it says little for them. They stand low in the scale of being. A bear will die for its cub, and the wild wolf defend her young, even in the face of the hunter; but something more is expected of man. He must have the spiritual affection, and that will teach him to look to the soul of his child, — to its spiritual culture, — to its religious instruction.

If, then, the religious instruction is the true instruction, and of all things the most important, and the child is fitted to receive it, how much the parent should be willing to do! for parents should always be the prime movers in the religious instruction of their children, and by them it should be considered the grand theme of life, — the centre of their thoughts, — the object of their prayers, — and the focus of all their hopes. A parent who desires not with his whole heart that his child should have a religious character, and who is not anxious to do all he can to aid his child in this thing, is not worthy to be a parent. A parent who does not consider the religious

character of his child as above all wealth and all earthly distinctions, is not alive to his duty to God, to himself, or his offspring. He neglects the precepts of Christ, and seeks not to kindle the lamp that God has placed in his hands. The parent who will not cherish, as the apple of his eye, every institution which he feels will aid in the religious instruction of his child, is not yet wholly alive to the majesty of Christian truth. But the parent who does love his child with a Christian love, and teaches it virtue, and breathes around it the spirit of devotion, — that parent will receive the approval of his own conscience, and the blessing of God.

The Spartan mother with enthusiasm buckled the sword to the side of her son, and told him to come home with honor, or be borne home dead. We wish to see a like enthusiasm in the spiritual warfare. We wish to see a joy, — a deep, soul-felt delight, in the parent's heart, while by God's blessing, he gives spiritual strength to his child, and girds upon him the armor of salvation. And will not parents feel this ? I am persuaded that they will ; — and then will they be to their children a burning and a shining light ; and when their earthly existence closes, they will leave the memory of a devout character as their richest legacy.

The Sunday school comes in as an assistance

to the parent ; — and it merely seeks to coöperate with the parent, unless in case of depravity, when it is obliged to take the place of the parent. The object of the Sunday school is to assist in giving religious instruction ; in bringing out the spiritual nature ; in teaching Christian duty. The object is good, and the result of its efforts has often been very beneficial. It has awakened a deeper interest, and infused a warmer devotion.

Perhaps in Sunday schools generally, teachers have sought to impart information more than to awaken a religious spirit. Perhaps they have been too much satisfied with teaching the catechism, and talking of natural history, and Jewish customs. But though these are highly important, still, if made the principal thing, there is but little accomplished. Something more is needed. The teacher must have a faith in the spiritual nature of the child. He must believe that it has the elements requisite to form the religious character; and then he will teach with power ; then he will go to the root ; then he will speak through the understanding to the affections. He will consider religion as the mainspring of the intellect, and feel, that if he can make the child religious, his intellect will the quicker strengthen and expand. The true impulse to improvement is not knowledge, but the indwelling spirit of religion. The

child must not only know, but feel. He must be taught to love prayer, and to follow meekly in the steps of Jesus. Natural history is well. Conversations on the Evidences are well. Catechisms are well. But they are all of little or no value, without the true spirit of religion. We should, then, bear in mind, that our work is to infuse this spirit; and we should ask ourselves in all that we do — Am I making this my aim? Is this the object of my prayers?

To accomplish this, we should all form for ourselves rules. We should study the philosophy of the child's mind; reflect upon the best methods of instruction, and strive to adapt ourselves to the capacities we address.

We should not be mechanical; we should leave as much as possible for the children to do. We should win confidence and awaken desire. The true education is not to give to the mind, so much as to bring out from the mind, — to quicken its creative power. All true good comes from within. Religious instruction should not be so much like pouring water into a cup, as stirring the sand, that hidden fountains may gush out. We should cultivate more the reflection, than the memory; and lead children to think, rather than to passively listen or repeat.

We should be patient. Not expecting to shape

the soul at once, as we would mould a bullet. Let us sow the seeds of truth faithfully, and let our prayers nourish them like the early and the latter rain ; and in due time there will be a harvest. Be not easily discouraged.

We should have a watchful eye to the varied capacity of children. Every chord in the harp cannot send forth the same tone ; but when swept by the skilful hand, the variations create harmony. A kind Providence has given to some quicker apprehensions than others ; and yet all are good of their kind. The best fruit does not always ripen the quickest; and all fruit does not need the same care. The child you think the most dull, may, after all, be the best.

Do not expect always the same result. The same instruction will produce a different effect upon different minds. The nourishment that makes the tulip look gay, gives a snowy whiteness to the lily. Different children receive different impressions. We do much if we keep some children where they are, and prevent their growing worse, — while others may improve every day.

We should be pointed in our remarks, and always have anaim before us. One idea plainly given, is better than twenty given vaguely.

In the use of illustrations, we should dwell

more upon the truth, than the illustration ; upon principles, rather than things. Tell a child, if you please, that Sir Thomas More, while he was Lord Chancellor of England, still had such reverence for his father, that before going to Westminster Hall he would kneel and ask his blessing ; but tell him also, that in this act, the Lord Chancellor was lost in the Man. Tell them it was his feeling of reverence, and not his title, that you admire, — and that the same act would have been as acceptable to God, if it had been performed by the smallest child, or the humblest individual. Show them that the same principle which actuated Oberlin, and led him into the high mountains of France, may lead them to carry a bucket of water for a poor neighbour. Show them the principle through the act, and lead them to acquire it. So with regard to places. Speak rather of the great Truths that were revealed in Palestine, than of the geographical divisions of the country. So with regard to Scripture. Teach its spirit, rather than its letter. In fine, teach religion ; not coldly and abstractly, but so that they may love it. Present it in such a way that their quick affections and lively imaginations may grasp it, and cling to it as their life. Bring out their love, their faith, and their spirituality. Forget not that they are children, — and do not

chill them by expecting them to depart from the beautiful characteristics of their age. Love to see them happy; and teach them so to love virtue, that their happiness may be complete.

These are a few simple thoughts which may aid us in our work; and these thoughts, if true, show that the principal requisite of a teacher, is a pure heart and a love of religion. The work of the teacher, if he have this spirit, will be a work of delight. His Sunday will be his happiest day — and the privilege of being a teacher, will be his greatest blessing.

Why, then, have we not more teachers? Why is it ever asked — "Who can we get to take this class?" If religious instruction is so important, if the Sunday school can do so much good, — if to teach is a privilege, — why is not every good young man a teacher? Why come they not up to help in this work, and lend it their strength and their prayers? It is a duty they owe to themselves; for it will do them good. It is a duty they owe the child; for it will benefit him. It is a duty they owe society; for by religion society is held together. It is a duty they owe to coming generations; for the children of the present generation will be the parents of the next. It is a duty they owe to God; He has placed them about us, and we know his desire is — "suffer

them to come." It is a work of gratitude to Jesus. "Whoso receiveth one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me." And he who neglects these duties, does it at imminent peril; for "whoso wrongeth one of these little ones," saith the Son of the most High God, "it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

The Sunday school is a school for the teacher. It brings out sympathy and love, which are the best part of our nature, and will live for ever. It tends to make us simple and artless, — one of the highest of Christian virtues. He who would become a Christian, must first become as the little child. It will teach us much of the human mind, before it has been warped by the world. It will teach us to know ourselves; for one soul mirrors another. It will help us to retain the freshness of childhood, so that the dews of the morning of life will sparkle about us all our days. It will teach us to value aright our own character; for that man's character can hardly be dear to himself, to whom the characters of children are not dear. It will lead us to liberalize our minds, and love humanity. It will teach us Scripture truth. One hardly knows the true beauty and power of Scripture, till he has begun to interpret

it to a child. It will also enable us, in some measure, to know the essential truths of the divine word. This truth is taught by children, that principles are more important than opinions, and that a virtue is better than mere theory.

When Solomon wished to know the real flowers in the wreath of the queen of Sheba, he opened the windows and let in bees. So, in finding out the most essential truths revealed by Jesus, I would be aided by the unsophisticated simplicity of the child ; for the truths, which are hid from the wise and prudent, Jesus has seen fit to reveal to babes.

These are a few of the indirect benefits that a faithful teacher gains in the Sunday school ; and he is always more indebted to the school, than the school to him. It is a vineyard of virtue to his own heart. While he gives, he receives ; while he teaches, he is taught ; and in the act of blessing, is himself thrice blest.

It is, however, to be remembered, that in this work there is difficulty, — there is responsibility, — there is labor ; and this has discouraged some from doing any thing, and made their hearts faint before they began. But the Christian's true joy is the joy of conquest. The soul, that loves duty, triumphs over obstacles ; and by every struggle it acquires new strength. We can never

do good without responsibility, or have any virtue without labor; for that virtue which loves not labor is no virtue, or, as Milton has said, it is at best but a blank virtue.

But again, some may say — "It is all true that the religious instruction is very well; but the view here given is exaggerated — it is onesided — it goes too far."

Is it so? If we will look deeper, we shall see that in fact, the story is but half told. We look at the child with the bodily eye — and its small form, its simplicity of look, conceal from us the mighty springs of action which are hidden within. We cannot, in the child, even see the man — much less the angel. We cannot prophesy, even with regard to earthly progress — much less the heavenly. Think you the mother of Newton, when she pressed her babe to her bosom, thought he was to advance so far in science, and discover some of the most wonderful laws of the material universe? Think you that the mother of Milton, when she sang lullabies over the cradle of her infant, dreamed that he was to write a poem which was to gain the admiration of genius through all time? Think you that those who saw Luther, at the age of fourteen, begging his bread from door to door, imagined that he was to be the leader in one of the greatest reformations

the world has ever known? Did those who saw Howard, a thin, pale, sickly boy, behind the counter of a grocer's shop in London, suspect that he was to be the great philanthropist of the world, and that his name would be revered by all people of every land? Did those who saw William Roscoe, at the age of thirteen, carrying potatoes to market on his head, imagine that he, by his own exertions, was to become the friend and correspondent of the most eminent men of his age — a member of parliament — a writer of one of the best histories of his day, — and that his Christian character would be revered across the Atlantic, and beyond the Alps? Did those who saw Robert Raikes industriously serving his apprenticeship at his father's printing-press, think that he was to start, in an humble way, in his own little town, a plan of instruction which would soon be eagerly spread throughout every quarter of Christendom? No: we cannot in the child even see the future man. What, then, would it be, if this veil of sense were withdrawn, and we could see the realities of the spiritual life, stretching out in endless glory before us; beholding the weak babe of the present, becoming the wonderful spirit of the future — dwelling with martyrs and prophets, and the holy company of apostles in the kingdom of God. Then, indeed, should

we see that there was no exaggeration. Then would come home a realizing sense of the unutterable importance of early religious instruction. Then should we feel, that although children were destined to take no important place in the view of men ; their place, however obscure, would be important in the sight of God, — and however humble their earthly lot, if they had attained the Christian character, and been true to the precepts of Christ, they would at length be led triumphantly through the welcoming hosts of heaven. It is this truth that must come home to us. We must realize immortality — and feel that if a child has not virtue, the hope of its joy will be blasted. Then shall we see the importance of our work. Then shall we toil, and faint not.

Children are common about us ; therefore they do not awaken thought. We are too much bound down to the present, and hemmed in by the senses. We do not realize the stupendous destinies of a human soul. We do not follow up, link by link, the infinite chain. We speak of a human mind as of a common thing. We do not reflect, or we should see it ascending, stage above stage, in the sublime theatre of worlds ; mounting higher and higher, heaven above heaven, increasing for ever in wisdom, and goodness, and power. We should feel that there was, in the endless

history of a child, more to awaken wonder than in the earthly history of empires. And thus every thing connected with that history would assume an immense importance. Nothing could be so small as to be trifling ; for all would appear in a true light, as connected with an eternal destiny. In the rill we should see the ocean ; and in the removal of one sin, we should see that, over which there would be joy in heaven. We should be willing to toil long, if we might plant but one truth. And thus, while we felt the sublime result that might follow from our exertions, we should never look upon our work as trivial.

When Milton was in Italy, he heard of the troubles of his country ; and wishing to do her all the service in his power, he left that garden of the world, with all its works of art, and magnificent beauty, that he might return to his native land. And what did he do when he arrived there ? He did that, which, perchance, made some statesmen smile ; — he opened a small school. Yet, when we look at this matter soberly, we may well question whether Milton did not, in this way, do his country more good, than many a noble lord, with his ostentation and princely parade. It is not that which makes the most show, which brings about the greatest actual result. And this truth should be laid close to

the heart of those who aid in instructing the child.

The same God, who moulded out the sun and kindled the stars, watches the flight of the insect. He who balances the clouds, and hung the earth upon nothing, notices the fall of the sparrow. He who gave Saturn his two rings, and placed the moon, like a ball of silver, in the broad arch of heaven, gives the rose leaf its delicate tint, and made the distant sun to nourish the violet. And that same Being notices equally the praise of the cherubim and the prayer of the little child. And he will bless the humble efforts of the Sabbath-school teacher, as well as the more extended efforts of an Oberlin.

The grandeur of our work should thus give importance to our labors, while the little good visible to the eye should never discourage us.

If we would Christianize the world, we must give religious instruction to the young. If we would build up the kingdom of Christ, we must bring up the child in the way he should go. We must remember, that "the child is father of the man"; and we must prevent vice in the future man, by instilling virtue into the child. We must begin early. We must feel that the child has the elements of mind necessary to form the religious character. We must nurture its love, its faith,

and its spirituality ; and we must feel that the whole of its education should be based upon this. The spiritual should give life to the intellectual. Children must be early baptized into the pure fountains of Eternal Truth ; then shall we see, as in the days of the Redeemer, children crying in the temple — " Hosanna to the Son of David."

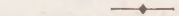
Were the blessed Saviour at this moment to stand before us, — and were he to say to us, as he said of old to Simon Peter, — " Lovest thou me ? " every pulse would throb, every lip would quiver, and the voice of every Christian would go up as from one soul, — " Lord, thou knowest that we love thee." Then would the voice of Jesus come to us again, as it came to Peter, — " Feed my lambs." Yes, they who would love Jesus, must feed his lambs.

Let us, then, be more true to our trust ; — let us cherish a more spiritual love, and be more faithful in diffusing religious instruction.

Thus may parent and teacher unite in one common cause, —

> " And, as the bird each fond endearment tries,
> To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies;
> So try each art, reprove each dull delay,
> Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way."

TO A CHILD.



"A dancing shape, — an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death."

WORDSWORTH.

All your thoughts are thoughts of gladness,
You care nothing for the morrow;
You have never dreamt of sadness,
You have never heard of sorrow,
You are happy in your play,
Singing songs the livelong day.

Bounding in your merry glee,
Full of laughter and of fun, —
Like a bright wave on the sea,
Sparkling in the summer's sun;
So fair and wild, you ever seem
The creature of a blessed dream.

Signs of thought are on thy brow,
Heavenly truths within thee shine ;
Faith and love are strengthening now,
Spiritual joys are thine, —
The little bud when first it blows,
Has in itself the perfect rose.

The very world before thy sight,
So free thou art from thoughts of sin,
Is radiant with that holy light
Which bursteth from within.
The air breathes out with music sweet,
And Nature smiles about thy feet.

Infant Angel ! — Pilgrim fair !
Joyous spirit, bright and free !
Fold thy little hands in prayer,
And ask a blessing upon me.
So pure thou art, I feel more prone,
'To gain thy blessing, than bestow my own.'

THE DIFFUSIVE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY,

IN BOSTON.

1840.

"I doubt whether he will ever find the way to heaven who desires to go thither alone."

FELTHAM.

"Good deeds are very fruitful. Out of one good action of ours, God produceth a thousand; the harvest whereof is perpetual. If good deeds were utterly barren and incommodious, I would seek after them for the conscience of their own goodness; how much more shall I now be encouraged to perform them, that they are so profitable both to myself and others."

BISHOP HALL.

DIFFUSIVE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

When we remember the immense number of Sunday Schools which are in operation at the present day, we cannot but feel that from them must go forth a stupendous influence. An influence to enlighten the mind and purify the heart, and which may thus establish more firmly the civil institutions of our country, and extend the boundaries of the kingdom of God. An influence which, striking its roots into time, reaches into eternity.

The Sabbath School has now taken its place among the noblest institutions of Christendom. The name of its excellence is in all the earth. The child of the Church, it may be doubtful whether the Church has more reason to rejoice in such a child, or the child in such a parent. It has so grown in beauty, and so girded itself with strength, that it stands forth the most efficient help-mate in the spread of the Gospel. There

is probably no movement which should be looked upon with profounder interest, or engaged in with warmer zeal. Should it be faithful to its purpose it will breathe into the heart of the people high principles of action, and awaken coming generations to a holier life.

Our interest in this subject has brought us together, and the topic to which I would particularly invite your attention is, THE DIFFUSIVE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

This may be considered the grand characteristic of the religion of Jesus, — its essence, — its life. From this the Sunday School had its origin, and to this it must owe all its future power. The spirit of the gospel leads us to go beyond ourselves, to care for others ; — its most essential element is Love.

All nature is a mute prophecy of this principle. Every thing in nature goes out of itself. The sun sends forth light, the clouds rain, the earth verdure, flowers fragrance. All the elements form one brotherhood. They go hand in hand. All the systems of the universe, by indissoluble ties are woven together. Each is a part of all, all has an influence on each. The humblest violet is watched over, and nourished, by vast and mysterious powers. The earth carries it on her bosom, the clouds refresh it with moisture, and

the great sun, looking down from a distance of over ninety millions of miles, feeds it with light, and clothes it with beauty. The seasons, varied as they may appear, are all help-mates to each other, and move around our planet, for one harmonious purpose. In the whole circle of creation, there is no single atom which lies wholly locked up in itself; that power at least, which science calls gravitation, goes forth from it, and serves to keep the globe and the extended universe together.

And as with nature, so with the God of nature. God is love. Before the material universe came forth in beauty, God existed in his own essence. Before finite beings lived, the Infinite Spirit reigned alone, in undisputed sovereignty; all power, and wisdom, and goodness, centred in Himself. But, in the infinity of his love, He created other beings to be the recipients of His bounty. He made all the works that fill the wide kingdoms of nature, and, above all, He created man, giving him the sublime privilege of holding immediate communion with Himself. Thus is God the fountain of infinite fulness, from which finite souls derive wisdom and life. Thus is He ever manifesting himself to the pure in heart, imparting to them perpetual blessings, scattering before them the tokens of his love,

and breathing his own spiritual essence into their souls.

As with God, so with Jesus. Jesus derived his immeasurable wisdom, and love, and goodness from the Father, and as he derived, so he imparted. There was in his soul a perpetual influx of celestial light streaming from the Infinite, and there was also a perpetual efflux, beaming, from the depths of his own being, out upon mankind. Thus was he a sun of righteousness to those who sat in the region of the shadow of death. The great characteristic of the Saviour was, his desire to diffuse his own spirit. His whole nature was love. He embraced, in his affections, all countries, and all time. He was benevolent and self-sacrificing, the true shepherd, who was willing to lay down his life for his sheep. He lived, and prayed, and toiled for others. He was crucified that they through his sufferings might rejoice, and through his death might live.

As with Christ, so with the apostles. They caught his spirit. They followed his example. They also went about doing good. "Go into all the world," said Jesus, "and preach the gospel to every creature." And they went. "Ye shall receive power from on high, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts

of the earth. — Ye have heard me reveal the eternal principles of right. Ye have imbibed spiritual life. Now proclaim these principles, and diffuse this life. In proportion as holiness is in you, let it shine out. Let it be diffused among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and in your labors I will be with you unto the end of the world." And with the spirit of Jesus burning in their souls they went abroad proclaiming, amid the storms of persecution, their glad tidings from heaven. They went in simplicity and godly sincerity. They heard the words of the Master, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And with these words kindling within them, they, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, quenched the violence of fire, and out of weakness were made strong. They triumphantly met mockings, and scourgings, and bonds and imprisonment. They were willing to be stoned, and sawn asunder, and tempted, and slain of the sword, that they might contribute to "the furtherance of the gospel." They warned every man, and taught every man in all wisdom, that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. And so keenly alive were they to the importance of their work, that Paul, the glorious prince of apostles, exclaims, "I ceased not day and night to warn every one of you with

tears." Thus did they sublimely manifest the diffusive nature of their principles.

And as it was with the apostles, so was it with the Primitive Christians. They followed their great leaders, and preached in Asia Minor, and Macedonia, and Greece, and the islands of the Ægean sea. Though the fires of persecution were lighted, though engines of torture were arrayed in their path, though before them were chains and dungeons, and armed men threatened their destruction, they felt that they had truth, and that the salvation of man depended upon its promulgation. Therefore did they go forth, and hazard their lives "for the name of the Lord Jesus," exclaiming, in the strong language of Tertullian, "The more you mow us down, the thicker we rise!" They proclaimed the truth fearlessly, while the Church expanded, and the word of God grew mightily and prevailed, and thus did the Primitive Christians manifest, in no ambiguous way, their own diffusive spirit.

And as with the Primitive Christians, so with all the great Reformers. When they caught new glimpses of divine truth; when new light from the revealed word opened upon them, they diffused it. They locked nothing up in the secret chambers of their own souls, but uttered to the world the views which gave them joy. Thus

were the incrustations, that had gathered over the church, broken in pieces, its frozen dogmas melted down, and its petrified forms rent asunder. They did not hide their heaven-lighted lamps under a bushel, but placed them where they gave light to the world. Thus were the truths which had dawned in the horizon of their own souls diffused abroad among others, and thus were they true to the vital spirit of the gospel.

The gospel is flowing over with this spirit. It beams out from every precept. Every doctrine it contains, every maxim it inculcates, bears testimony that "no man liveth to himself," that, if we have the light, we should so let it shine before others, that they, seeing it, may glorify God. This is the central truth of the Bible. Love to God is the first commandment, and love to man is the second. Not on the first alone, but "on these two, hang all the law and the prophets."

If this is considered an important principle by the writers of the gospel, so should it be by the ministers of the gospel. They have been students of divinity ; have searched for truth ; have unfolded the holy oracles, and now they come forth to stand between God and the people, and make known their honest convictions. They are the great spiritual sowers, who are to scatter abroad the incorruptible seed of the word ; not

to conceal it, in their own private granaries, but to diffuse it over the fields of humanity.

They believe, and therefore speak ; they speak that they may instruct ; they would instruct for they know that their message will ennoble the soul, and awaken it to unending progress. Thus they come, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." To transfuse the principles of virtue and holiness, and make those among whom they labor, "a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

And in proportion as ministers of the gospel are true to their office, and live in accordance with these noble principles, they will awaken in all around a kindred spirit, for when the people have imbibed, they also will wish to impart. Having the inward life, they cannot conceal it. Having divine treasures, they will not hoard them. Having a mission to perform, "how will they be straitened, till it be accomplished!" Here then is the glory of the Sabbath School. As the planets drink light from the sun, so do the teachers drink light from the pastor and the word of God ; and as the stars reflect their beams to enlighten the earth, so do these living constellations reflect the light of truth upon the opening minds that gather around them. The reasons which make it important for a minister of the gospel to love holiness, make it important that

his hearers should love it ; and the reasons which make it important that the minister should strive to awaken others to a love of holiness, make it important that his hearers should do so likewise. Every hearer of the word, should, in some degree, be a minister of the gospel ; every citizen in the republic, a missionary of the cross. All may manifest their faith by their practice, and awaken many to a love of virtue, by the silent eloquence of their lives. And, though they stand not up in the great congregation, or utter themselves in chapel or cathedral, high thoughts may drop sweetly from their lips, and in a thousand ways they may impart to other minds the truths that inspire their own. In proportion as a soul has true spiritual life, by every law of Nature, and Revelation, and God, all of which are in perfect harmony, it will seek its diffusion.

It is this indwelling life which has been the seminal principle in all the great eras of the church. It is this which must give life to the Sunday School. Without it the Sunday School is but a mechanical movement, a spasmodic manifestation ; with it, it is the beautiful outworking of divine truth, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Too often has it been thought that the minister was to bring forward arguments, and enlighten his hearers upon controversial subjects, and,

when he had gained assent, and satisfied the understanding, here rest satisfied. But this is not the great work; the great work is, to impart spiritual life, to kindle holy aspirations, longings for the absolute good, and thus lead to a fellowship with Christ and God. In proportion as this is the object of the pastor's labors, he will awaken the missionary spirit, the diffusive spirit, the desire to do good. The true lovers of the word will rejoice to hold sweet counsel together. They will know they have passed from death unto life, because they love the brethren. They will thus joyfully strengthen each other's hands, and encourage each other's hearts in spiritual things. Cherishing the truth with an earnest and heavenly devotion, they will desire to impart it, and among other manifestations of this spirit, the more advanced will naturally gather the young around them, that they may explain the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Here then we have the Sunday School, and when we look at it in this light, it seems surrounded by celestial brightness, and bears upon its brow the very signet of Heaven.

In the ideal church is the man of God, who imparts truth to the people, who visits them in their joys and afflictions, as a spiritual adviser and sympathizing friend; then the people lov-

ing to walk together in the steps of Jesus ; then the children gathering around their elders, that they may hear from their lips the things which concern their salvation. In this way the hearer becomes a preacher, the disciple a guide. The great congregation is divided into small congregations, and while those of more capacious understandings gather the truths which are uttered in the sanctuary, they, in their turn, impart them to those of feebler powers. Thus the layman becomes a missionary, not by crossing oceans, or tearing himself away from the endearments of home, but by carrying the missionary spirit into the midst of that little circle, who gaze into his face with joy while he shows them that they are heirs of an eternal inheritance. Thus the layman becomes a most efficient co-worker in the spread of holiness, and there is raised up a lay ministry, often as efficient, as zealous, as pious, and in every way as worthy of respect, as the ministry at the head of the church. Wheels, revolving within wheels, in harmonious action. Planets moving around suns, and satellites around planets, while planets, and satellites, and suns all circle around God as their centre. Thus the diffusive spirit of the gospel, which is now moving so powerfully among the laymen of the church, is calling out some of the brightest man-

ifestations of Christianity. We see new energies starting up, all around us, into vigorous action. And the very clergy, who might be tempted to slumber, are aroused, and spurred onward by the noble-hearted souls who sit under their preaching, and who feel that the great purpose of their existence is to be "up and doing."

Is it going too far to say that there are few things more cheering, than the diffusive spirit which is now felt among the laity? The warm, personal interest in religion which has led them to undertake so much, and to feel so conscious of their power and so sensible of their responsibility? True, they may wear no official robes, but, filled with a love of God, and enlightened and purified by spiritual communion, they are indeed most worthy to carry out the purposes of the gospel. Thus do I regard the teachers of the Sabbath School as a holy priesthood in the church, standing in the midst of the sanctuary, to break the bread of life to those of whom Jesus emphatically said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." They have caught the true spirit, and obey the voice of the good Shepherd, who seems still to say, "Feed my lambs."

In what has been said, the desire to diffuse truth has been spoken of as a natural and necessary consequence of the absolute possession of

truth. Are we to understand then that those who are most active have the highest views? — Not so, — we may no doubt perceive truth with the Understanding, and not desire to impart it, but it is one thing to perceive truth, and quite another to possess it. It is one thing to acknowledge its outward beauty, and quite another to have it, living and breathing in our own souls. Then (and not till then) it becomes the life of our life, a part of our inmost nature, dear to us as existence, opening new views of creation and God, interweaving itself with all that is high and holy, and being thus dear, and felt as the very kingdom of God within us, it will be our irrepressible desire to impart to others a joy which we feel to be so precious to ourselves. Have not many fallen into a sad error in looking upon religion chiefly through the intellect? Making it a matter of logic, more than of devotion? Are there not some who dwell too much upon syllogistical reasonings, and too little upon conformity with the will of Heaven? who content themselves with speculative opinions, while they neglect direct intercourse with God? Are not splendid theories too often united with deep-rooted selfishness? May not a church have exalted views of humanity, noble perceptions of God and Revelation, and yet remain cold within itself, and comparatively

indifferent to the good of others? And if so, why is it thus? Is it not that while the understanding is enlightened, the sentiments sleep? That the shadow is mistaken for the substance? That religion is looked upon as an imaginary good, not a divine reality? That it is acknowledged, but not possessed — seen, but not felt?

> "As the sun
> Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
> In the atmosphere,"

so may we behold the image of truth, before the truth itself has absolutely entered our minds, and as that cold image sends forth no vivifying rays, so is it with the image of truth, when with cold splendor it shines in the intellect; but let the truth itself, in its own celestial brightness, rise in the horizon, and then the tide of day will flow down the mountains, and cause all nature to break forth in gladness over hill and valley. Thus might we not look upon some of our churches as they gaze on the image of truth, and shiver with coldness in the frosty atmosphere? Would to God that the living truth might warm and quicken them to earnest action!

From what we have seen, is there not reason to believe that in proportion as any individual absolutely possesses the spirit of the gospel, he

must and will exert himself to impart it? That man cannot truly love virtue himself, who does not wish others to love it. Christianity cannot be rightly valued in that church where no active measures are taken for its diffusion. "Here," it may be said, "we shall have all the evils of sectarianism." But let it be remembered that there is an immeasurable difference between the wish to diffuse Holiness, and the low purpose of strengthening a party. Narrowness and bitterness are indeed objectionable, but not the desire to see all mankind sitting like brothers at the feet of Jesus. To be clamorous that others should assent to certain dogmas, while, if they do not, we stand ready to treat them unkindly, this, we may well say, is neither generous nor right. Such a spirit is not the spirit of the gospel, and such a spirit no one should manifest. But if we feel that we have soul-inspiring views of God and Revelation, views calculated to give life to the noblest powers of the soul, and regenerate the world, then we have no moral right to stand still. We are bound to disseminate those views, and to do so in love; not to cause dissensions, but to awaken Holiness.

The spirit of Christ is above narrow considerations. It cares not for sects, but for truth, and thus while it cherishes universal principles, it re-

spects private judgment. It reveres as essential not that which is peculiar to one, but that which is common to all. It seeks not for uniformity of opinion, but purity of heart; not verbal belief, but perfection of character. It looks upon these as the very soul of religion, and hails their spread as the dawn of a brighter day. Taking then this view, may we not say that it is the duty of every Christian to disseminate those interior principles which give vitality to his faith, and which constitute the chief glory of the religion of Jesus?

But I now take another view. The diffusive spirit is not only a result of having truth, but a means of acquiring more. As we give, so shall we receive. The husbandman who hopes for a plentiful harvest, must bountifully scatter his seed, and as he scatters so will he gather; and thus with virtue and wisdom,

> "They are treasures which do grow by use,
> And multiply by spreading."

Truth is so active in its nature, that it will not remain in a soul which seeks not its diffusion. If a tree should no longer bear leaves, it must die. If the sun should no longer send forth light, it would cease to be a sun; so in proportion as a soul should voluntarily refuse to impart divine life, it will cease to have divine life. He who

would selfishly monopolize truth, retains what he has, as those who hold snow, the closer it is grasped, the sooner it melts. Truth is not a stagnant pool, but a fountain. If the water remain still, it is soon covered with slime, but if it spring forth, and wind down the hills, and through the green meadows, then a new supply gushes up, and the breaking bubbles, sparkling like crystal, show that in its very action there is life. Thus, in striving to do, we obtain. When the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles, it came in tongues of flame, as if, in that mute way, it would signify that all sincere disciples must have tongues warm with truth, and be ever ready, as with lips touched by a coal from the altar, to declare the counsels of God. As we do this, we shall receive new strength and higher perceptions. As we perform the will, we shall know of the doctrine. As we strive to reproduce in the hearts of others our most exalted sentiments of truth and duty, we shall have closer fellowship with the Father, and thus in every sincere attempt to elevate a fellow-being we shall ennoble ourselves.

It is related of the celebrated John Howe, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, that being often applied to for protection by men of all parties in those eventful times, he never refused assistance to any worthy person, whatever his religious

views, until one day Cromwell said to him, "Mr. Howe you have asked favors for every body except yourself, pray when does your turn come?" "My turn, my lord protector," said Howe, "is always come when I can serve another."

And thus it is with all, by the immutable decrees of God, in loving to do good, we acquire a love for goodness itself, and in loving goodness we prepare ourselves to receive it more fully into our souls. Goodness is infinite, we receive of its unbounded fulness, in proportion as we are faithful to what we have received already, and thus are well-doing and well-being indissolubly connected together; and a love of God is increased by a right love of our neighbour, and a right love of our neighbour is increased by striving to do something for his spiritual advantage. Thus are we brought to feel that sublime saying of Jesus, "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall be poured into your bosom." And thus we see that diffusing truth is one of the golden keys that will open the kingdom of heaven, and action for the good of others, not only a manifestation of inward life already kindled, but a means, and a very essential and powerful means, of increasing that life.

Thus have we looked upon the diffusive spirit

of Christianity as one of its most marked characteristics, one of its absolute requirements. The proud Roman confined his sympathy to his own city, and looked upon surrounding provinces only as they served to add to the splendor of the capital. The Christian feels that from his home, and his city, holy influences should be sent from centre to circumference ; mankind being one brotherhood, and God the Father of all. Every fellow-being is a fellow-pilgrim, upon whom he looks with sincerest sympathy, with open hand, and warm heart, ever ready to counsel and encourage. Thus, while philosophy taught "the love of wisdom," it was left for Christianity to unfold, far more gloriously, "the wisdom of love," a spiritual, active, world-embracing affection, which in the vast whole, overlooks not the good of each, and extending through individuals, encircles mankind.

Thus is the diffusive spirit an essential spirit in Christianity, and thus is it necessary to the life of the church. A church without it must languish. The mark of disease is upon it ; — and it must soon rest in sepulchral coldness, unless it arouse its energies and put forth its powers. The church which bears no outward fruit, cumbereth the ground. The church which carries its talent in a napkin, is an unprofitable servant. If it

would retain the respect of the faithful, and the blessing of Heaven, whatever truth it has, it must diffuse. This is the great pledge of life, and the great means of retaining life, both with the church and the individual.

If the views here presented are true, then the most important work with the minister, is, out of the fulness of his own heart, to invigorate and inspire all who are around him. In his private devotions, in his pastoral walks, in his public ministrations, this purpose should add fire to his zeal, and constancy to his efforts. He should not idly luxuriate in philosophic dreams or splendid abstractions. He should not rest satisfied with historic detail or prudential maxims, but rise into holy action; and with unquenchable ardor, and serene hope, work, as if to move heaven and earth by his endeavour.

If these views are true, then every layman should say, "What have I yet done? What am I now doing? In what manner, and to what degree, am I diffusing the spirit of the gospel?" If these views are true, then every layman should qualify himself to impart truth, and to impart it wisely. There should be no deficiency of earnest and able teachers. Instructing should be considered a privilege, and all the duties connected with it, in the highest degree honorable, worthy of

self-sacrifice, and tending to give greater elevation to the teacher, as well as the taught.

If these views are true, then those already engaged as teachers should strive to cherish within themselves, with ever increasing zeal, the spiritual life. Without this their labor is in vain, with it they can do all things. They must not rest satisfied with the letter of the Scripture, but seek for the spirit, remembering that the letter killeth while the spirit maketh alive. They must, therefore, have direct intercourse with the Father, and, through meditation and prayer, receive from him revelations of truth, and effusions of goodness ; in this way alone can they feed others with the bread that comes down from heaven. Thus the greatest requisite for the prosperity of a Sunday School, is spiritual life. The school will flourish in exact proportion as the teachers partake of this spirit. If they would increase their influence, let them increase their piety. If they would impart life, let them gain life.

To bring this about should be the leading object of the teachers' meetings. In these meetings the main desire should be to awaken a stronger love for self-improvement, for Christian excellence, for communion with God. If a teacher comes to a child without inward spiritual life, and hopes to bring out from its mind virtue and

truth, may we not say with the woman of Samaria, "You have nothing wherewith to draw, and the well is deep." The first duty of the teacher is to go down into the depths of his own soul. He who would gain right access to the spiritual nature of a child, will find the nearest way is through his own spiritual nature. He must speak of what he knows and what he feels, and the teachers' meetings should therefore quicken the teachers themselves, and thus should exist there the diffusive spirit, and holy emotions, like electric fire, flow freely from heart to heart. If we call the teachers the unordained clergy, may we not consider the teachers' meetings as private divinity schools, over which the settled minister is to preside? And, as he has had signal advantages, he will here be able to impart of his experience and wisdom, and thus diffuse among the teachers that knowledge which they will so gratefully receive.

If the views here presented are true, then they will throw much light upon the subject of instruction. We shall see that the chief work is not so much to impart a knowledge of words, as a love of virtue; not so much geographical descriptions, as principles of conduct; not so much in leading to outward regularity, as inward, spiritual life. We shall not by any means dissever

these, but always wish to unite them. We shall see that small sins are small giants, which may at first appear dwarf-like, but which have power, if not resisted, to bind the soul, as with cords of iron, and cast it into perdition. We shall see also that every sigh for sin, every aspiration for virtue, every inclination for spiritual good, is to be watched over with deepest interest, that we are to teach children that these are little glimmerings, shining through the crevices of a door, and, if they will follow, the door shall be opened, and they will behold the wide heavens, and walk in God's marvellous light. We are not only to tell them what we see, but to lead them to see for themselves, to stir up their slumbering energies, and thus awaken the witness within them. We are not to dogmatize. We are not to speak even of God's commands, as if they were arbitrary dictates, but feeling that they are in accordance with eternal right, we shall lead them to see that revelation does not create truth, but reveals it, and that God not only speaks to the soul, but in the soul. Thus may we lead the child to the high enjoyments of true spiritual life.

The views here unfolded do not imply that, in order to teach, a person must already have attained perfection. They do indeed imply that a teacher should love holiness; but having this

love, the active work of diffusing it will be the surest means of acquiring more. In the attempt to express our thoughts, our very conceptions grow brighter. In the view of imparting religious feelings, our own emotions are deepened, and thus, as Teachers, week after week, assemble to instruct, they will have constant and peculiar incitements to self-improvement. Hence, so far from avoiding this labor, on account of not having extraordinary Christian acquirements, we should enter it, and labor the more faithfully, that we may thereby gain those acquirements.

If there is a response to these views among those who are already engaged in the work, they will not, for any slight reason, be tempted to leave it. They will remain year after year steadfast to their purpose; in the morning, sowing their seed, and in the very evening of life, withholding not their hand. They will feel, with ever increasing force, the words of Sir James Mackintosh, "Think more of the good you can do, than the evil you can only lament." And when about to be called to another world, they will be able to say with Whitefield, who preached the day before his death, and being weary and faint, exclaimed, "Lord, though I am tired in thy work, I am not tired of it."

And once more, if a Teacher truly has this

diffusive spirit, he will carry it with him wherever he goes. Not as a formal thing, but as a living emanation, it will shine from his soul. In the beauties of nature, and the busy scenes of life, he will carry it with him. When he is with those who do not sympathize, he will gain their respect, and awaken them to reflection. And when he is with those who are fellow-laborers, he will speak what he sincerely feels, and his words will be calculated to lead them to renewed exertion. Should he be absent from his own place of abode, and dwell awhile in secluded retreats, or crowded cities, he would not have laid aside his nobler nature, but would rejoice to say a word, or perform a duty, which might benefit a cause around which cluster in his mind so many happy associations.

And more than this, the same spirit of vigorous Christian love will lead to yet wider desires. He will wish that others may be sent to diffuse the true spirit, and he will gladly give his aid that they may be sent. And here we touch upon a subject of deep interest. How many, in retired parts of the country, would rejoice to have some warm-hearted, truth-inspired man come among them, who, by his experience, might enlighten, and by his own deep feelings animate to greater exertion and holier life! Are there not those

who will go forth to kindle the fires on the altar, and, as the burning brand was sent from village to village, among the Highlands of Scotland, to pass from school to school, with a message which will arouse and rejoice the church ?

If Sunday Schools would associate themselves for such an object, individuals might be sent who would speak an instructive and awakening word. And in addition to this, at a small expense, small tracts might be printed for extensive distribution. These silent monitors would go forth as the winged messengers of goodness and love, and, while they would be read by the young with great avidity and delight, might be instrumental of great good.

If the teachers and scholars would unite in contributing what they are able for the accomplishment of such an object, that knowledge and virtue might be more generally extended, much might be done. John Wesley (that great ecclesiastical legislator of Methodism) founded his whole system of finance for the immense expenses of his denomination, upon penny collections ; and by these small contributions you will remember what incalculable sums were raised. Might not much in this way be done among us ? A thought is the seed of an act ; the seed has not come to maturity until it bear fruit in the act.

If we feel, let that feeling lead to some worthy result. Have we enough of spiritual life to desire its diffusion? If we have, we shall make ourselves felt, and the cause of truth will not drag heavily, but will glide onward like a mighty river, and spread like the waves of the sea.

When Zoroaster's scholars asked him what they should do to obtain winged souls, such as might soar into the bright beams of divine truth, he bade them bathe in holiness, which is as the river of Paradise. And so let it be with us, until our whole souls are quickened into spiritual life; and then shall we all, as by an irresistible impulse, desire its diffusion; for, in the beautiful language of Spenser, —

> "The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,
> And labors with a glorious, great intent,
> Can never rest, until it forth have brought,
> Some glory excellent!"

SABBATH-SCHOOL INSTRUCTION.

——— Why weeps the child so young?
Why doth the look of sadness shade her brow?
Why sigh those innocent lips? Why doth her head
Bow like the delicate lily in the storm?
She hath looked and can find no earthly thing
To which the love of her heart may cling;
The mother who cherished and gave her birth,
Is grovelling low mid the sins of earth,
And the sire to whom she would fain look up,
Has steeped his brain at the maddening cup: —
Her heart is torn with its hopes and fears;
Oh, blame her not if she melts in tears!

* * * * *

——— Why looks the child so changed?
Why dwells that tranquil smile upon her lip,
Why does her dark eye brighten, and her face
Gleam with intelligent beauty? —

She hath learned to look to her home above,
And hath found there one whom her heart may
love;
She is not now what she long hath been,
She hath learned to look at the world within,
She hath fed on the food of heaven below,
And kept her heart pure amid scenes of woe,
And the joy that she reaps shall never fail,
Though the sun grow dim and the stars wax pale.
——— Now in her hours of trial,
Her spirit looketh upward, and she sees,
In all the beauty of this visible world,
The symbols of God's glory, and the types
That may awaken in her infant soul
Perceptions of the Eternal. Thus, though poor,
God is her father, and the heavens her home.

ON THE IMPORTANCE

OF

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE

IN DAY SCHOOLS.

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,

AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING.

1835.

"The end of learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love him, and to imitate him, as we may the nearest, by possessing ourselves of true virtue."

MILTON.

"Whatever turns the soul inward upon itself, tends to concentrate its forces, and fit it for higher and stronger flights of science."

BURKE.

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

We have met to consider the importance of giving a right moral direction in the early stages of education, or, in other words, the advantage of introducing moral and spiritual culture into our private and public schools.

In considering this subject we would carefully avoid every thing like exaggeration, and every thing of a merely theoretical character. We would aim alone at the true and the practical. We would look at things as they are, and suggest only that which reason and reflection sanction as good.

Before entering upon this subject, let us inquire what is the object aimed at in the present mode of education? It is to teach that which will afterwards aid in acquiring a livelihood. Reading, writing, geography and arithmetic are universally taught, because they will be needed in daily business. This is well. They are of un-

doubted utility. No one would wish them neglected. And, in following out the topic we have met to consider, nothing shall be alluded to, which would interfere with any of these branches. As far as they go they are good, yet where they are all taught, and taught alone, the most important will be wanting. The understanding will be strengthened to the neglect of the affections. The head will be cared for more than the heart. And thus, while there is increase of knowledge, there will be a lack of true wisdom. If there is this deficiency in our present mode of instruction, then we must have something more. We must attend to moral and spiritual culture.

What is true education? It is that which instructs the mind and strengthens the intellect, and it is also that which forms the character, and quickens virtue. It begins at the centre and goes outward. While it enriches the understanding, it enlightens the will; and in connexion with other things, strengthens the ideas of right and wrong. It always recognizes in the child, a being whose destiny reaches through future ages, and in whose infant spirit are wrapped up germs of inconceivable power.

That which falls short of this, cannot be true education. Arithmetic, geography, and grammar are good, and of course should always be taught,

but there is a want of the soul which they cannot satisfy, and which should be cared for in our day schools. The tree of knowledge is not the tree of life ; and that which will be positively useful, is not business and labor alone, but that which, in business and labor, gives strength to overcome temptation, and makes the spirit alive to that great inward process which is ever going on amid all the duties of life.

Ought not our schools, then, to watch over the moral nature ? Should they not consider the discipline of mind, as more important than the acquisition of knowledge ? While they are teaching to read, should they not teach to think ? While they are teaching to calculate, should they not teach to reflect ? While they are teaching that which may aid in gaining wealth, should they not also teach that which is above wealth, and which may make the soul eternally happy ? Should they not have reference to the real nature of the child, and the great purposes of God ?

To give a right moral direction to the minds of children, we must have true Christian morality taught in our schools, — the morality of the heart, — the morality which springs from a consciousness of duty, a sense of right. We mean that we would not only have the young taught to appear good, but also to be good ; — that we would not

only have them see virtue, but possess it. We would cultivate those higher capacities which God has implanted in every mind, and present those unchanging principles which are the only source of true well-being.

If such an end were kept in view throughout our schools, it would be an unspeakable good.

Let us then consider some of the objections that might be made.

Some may say that the old plans are good, why make a change ?

Granting they are good ; it is certainly no reason why they should never grow better. New light may break in ; wiser plans may be thought of ; and, while we should guard against needless innovations, we should ever be anxious to improve. It was the glory of Kepler and Copernicus to say to their successors, — " Leave us and go on."

Some may believe, that by frequent reference to moral subjects, the minds of the young will grow satiated ; that the work will be overdone, and bad effects follow.

This would depend upon circumstances. If the teacher had little sincerity, and went to his work as a task, this would perhaps be the case, but none will probably say that a child would grow weary of such truth if it were properly pre-

sented, for its natural tendency is to create a desire for more.

But would it not interfere with the child's freedom of mind ?

Not necessarily, for every child should be left at liberty to use his own reason, and express his own thoughts. And while the freedom of mind should be held sacred, it should also be remembered that we are not, on this account, to keep away the opinion of all other minds. And if we would exclude moral culture from our schools, because of the freedom of mind, carrying out the same principles into other spheres would lead us to strange extremities.

But it may be said that a child is too young to care for such things, and that his mind is not yet matured enough to be benefited by them.

We believe that any one who loves children, and has watched over the character of their minds, will feel that this is a false idea. There is no time in life when truths, if presented, make such deep and lasting impressions. The mind of a child is not empty. It is not blank paper. It has life and power. It is full of the seeds of things. The work of the teacher is not to pour in, but to draw out. The capacity is there. The teacher is to awaken it. The moral and the spiritual already exist within the child's mind, as

the flower exists in the bud, and education is as the sun, and the air and the dew to call forth its beauty and fruitfulness. If this is allowed to be true, the importance of moral and spiritual culture must be seen and felt.

Still some may hesitate, and say that the morality taught at home is sufficient, and that it is thus needless to introduce it into the schools.

With regard to this, it should be remembered that there are vast numbers of children whose parents pay no attention whatever to their moral and spiritual culture ; many whose parents are absolutely vicious, many who are indifferent, and many more who feel themselves to be almost wholly unfitted for the work. Our primary, grammar, and district schools are open to all, and from the multitude who go to them, who of us does not feel that the spiritual wants of many are (in their homes) entirely neglected ? Indeed there is reason to fear that even religious parents do not always take proper pains to strengthen inward principles.

Yet some may again say, — There are Sunday schools, and these will surely answer.

What ! are one or two hours a week a just proportion for instruction in Christian morals ? It is true that the Sunday schools are a great good ; but to those children who are neglected

at home, they can do, comparatively speaking, but little. Any candid mind will see at once that two or three hours in the week is far too little to give to this great work. And though we would not wish that the day schools should be like Sunday schools, yet we would have them far more spiritual than they now are. We would have them more philosophically adapted to the higher wants of the human mind.

Another question naturally arises, — Would not this plan interfere with private religious opinion ?

There would, no doubt, be danger of this, if an indiscreet teacher attempted the work. Though, perhaps, on the whole, even with such a teacher, there would be more good done than if the subject of morals were entirely neglected. But there could hardly be an individual worthy of the high office of teacher who might not speak of morality without reference to party opinion. There are great spiritual truths which are one and the same among all Christians, and a teacher would be little fitted for his vocation, if his heart were not alive to this. The principles of Christian morality are universal. The opinions of men may and do vary, but all devout Christians cherish alike the same Christian virtues. All believe in the existence of God ; His omnipotence, om-

nipresence, and infinite love ; in the revelation of truth by His Son ; its greatness, its necessity, its incalculable worth ; — in the deformity and loathsomeness of vice, in the beauty and soul-enkindling power of virtue ;—in the importance of Faith, and Justice, and Benevolence ; — in the duty of constantly living as under the eye of God, and preparing for the great Future.

Revelation on these points is distinct, and it is these general, and universal, and essential principles, believed in alike by all, that we would have taught in our schools. It is these we would have referred to, and explained, and acted upon.

Having considered some of the reasons which might be offered against teaching morals in our schools, let us now look at some of the reasons for it.

The child's very nature seems to require it. The mind of a child is inquisitive. It seeks always for a why and a wherefore. And though it may be said, that some other place is better fitted to supply this want, yet it seems to me, that even though the want is, in part, supplied elsewhere, yet, when the child is in the school five or six hours every day, it is proper to attend to it there also. The child has a moral and spiritual nature, and this in itself is a strong argument

for moral and spiritual culture. And if such culture is good at home, it must, also, be good in the school. We ought not, then, so far to separate the intellectual from the moral nature, as to place them entirely under the care of different teachers. It may be injurious to the mind itself; for the mind should be developed harmoniously.

There are many branches of education which must be very much injured by being disconnected from the moral and spiritual.

Every thing which has to do with Natural History requires constant connexion with the good and the true. We can hardly refer to any appearance of the earth, or the heavenly bodies, without reference to the Supreme Ruler. There are, also, in many of the common studies, opportunities for considering the wisdom and goodness of God, or the wants and duties of the human mind. And it seems to me that where any thing is taught without reference to these things, when the subject admits of it, much is lost that would engage and interest young minds; much that would impart life and freshness to their studies. Would not more interest be felt in the study of geography, if the character of the inhabitants was spoken of, and the characteristic virtues and vices of the people dwelt upon? or if those works of nature were described, which in the various portions of

the globe, seem to bear most clearly the stamp of an all-wise Creator? Would not the study of history give more pleasure, if in it we trace the growth and character of mind, the moral and spiritual progress of the human race, and the overruling hand of God? The spiritual would give vitality to almost every topic upon which the mind could think, and there is hardly any branch of education that would not necessarily require it, if it were taught thoroughly. We should never look upon any portion of Nature without feeling the Divine Presence, and without seeing some reflection from the Infinite Mind, and we should feel that any study which does not require this may be of value in a certain sphere, but its value must always be of an inferior and perishable kind. All knowledge should grow out of religion, as leaves, blossoms, and branches grow out of the root and trunk of a tree. Nourished through that sacred stem, its fruit will give health and vigor to the soul; growing elsewhere, it must be shrivelled and dry. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Another reason why our schools should attend to moral and spiritual culture is, that it is a great help to the intellect. It sharpens the perceptions. It fertilizes the mind. It renders the mental powers more fruitful. "The entrance of thy

word," says the Psalmist, "giveth light, it giveth understanding even to the simple." Heathen Philosophy taught, that by cultivating the intellect we should elevate the moral character, and this, no doubt, to a great extent, was true ; but Christian Philosophy teaches a still greater truth, that by cultivating the moral nature, we ennoble the intellect, for "in the moral being lies the source of the intellectual." It was the custom of Socrates, when persons asked him a question, before he answered them, to inquire concerning their moral character, that he might know whether they were to be benefited by his reply. "A conquest over a single passion," says Coleridge, "will teach us more of thought, and more effectually awaken the faculty, and form the habit of reflection, than a year's study in the schools without it." The purifying of the heart naturally tends to strengthen the intellect, and fit it for the reception of truth. Ought we not then by morality to quicken the mental powers, and temper them aright ? Is it not best to begin at the true source, even though for a while the mind should appear to make less progress in other things ? "He goeth better," saith St. Augustine, "that creepeth in his way, than he that runneth out of his way."

Again, we should encourage moral and spiritual culture, because it is in its very nature of supreme

importance. There is no other culture, in point of real value, which can be compared with it. Christian morality is necessarily more precious than knowledge. It gives a right direction to all the other powers. It is the true source of happiness, the great purpose of life, the object and end of our being. Without it the man of knowledge is but learnedly ignorant; with it the ignorant may be worthy of heaven. It is the life and soul of all that is good. The sciences and the arts without it are empty. The Persians say, that Zoroaster interrogated the Deity, and asked how the world had begun, and when it would end. The Deity answered to these questions, "Do what is good, and gain immortality." Thus while the mere knowledge of things may gain us earthly honor, the knowledge of the good and the true will open to us the kingdom of God. Let us then feel that if we can give a mind a living sense of this one truth, we have done more for it than any learning could do. If we can lead it to be sincere, obliging, and good, to love every thing that is honest and true, we have given it an impulse of improvement which it will carry on itself; a healthy impulse which will keep the inward eye ever open to catch every new ray of Divine light. Let the young mind, above all things, then, be cherished and warmed with the fire of a holy love.

Teach it that for the extent of its future life, all time will be too short. Let the earth, with its valleys and hills, and deep sky with its burning stars, be penetrated and illumined by spiritual truth. Thus will the whole visible creation be one vast mine of wisdom. The spirit will have become its own teacher, and the most important truths will be its daily lessons.

These are a few out of many reasons for attending to moral and spiritual culture in our schools. The view, I am aware, may be thought better fitted for the closet than the world ; but if it is a desirable thing, if it is according to the Christian plan, then the time will come, sooner or later, when it will be a matter of practice. Let us, then, look at our school system, and see if it is at present all that we could wish.

Has it enough to do with spiritual culture ? We know that very much may be said in its praise, and we rejoice that it is so. But looking at it carefully, may not very much be said of its defects ? We are wont to feel an honest pride when we speak of the schools of New England ; but when we remember how far short they still are of the true standard, we must feel anxious to press on. Let us learn that the most essential thing is moral culture, and that mere mechanical knowledge is not enough.

The present opportunity will not permit our going far into detail; but let us take up one or two prominent points.

How is our school discipline? This will always have an important influence on the character of a child.

How are our modes of punishment? This is a subject of great importance. One unjust blow may do incalculable harm; a petulant, passionate schoolmaster may sour the dispositions of many children under his care. Anger should never take the place of love. Pain should not be so much feared as the thought of doing wrong. Punishment, to be respected, should be just. It should be administered with calmness. It should be given, not as to a child alone, but an immortal being.

When Plato lifted his hand to strike his servant, he remembered his feelings, and stood with his arm uplifted. When asked by a friend what he was doing, he replied, "I am punishing a passionate man." Let every teacher think of Plato, and remember that when punishment is given with an improper feeling, or in an improper manner, the children will probably receive more harm than good. All punishment should be so given as to produce a moral effect.

How are rewards looked upon? They may

strengthen morality, or weaken it ; and they always do one or the other. That reward which is unjust, naturally has an immoral tendency. That reward which is given to success, rather than to effort, has an immoral tendency. That reward which is given without regard to character, has an immoral tendency. That reward which leads to pride or ambition, has already awakened immorality. Thus, rewards injudiciously given, may lead to moral evil.

Besides, rewards, unless given with great care, are a false allurement, and produce an artificial excitement, which may ultimately do harm. Learning contains its own reward ; and that which leads the mind to pursue a true good, for an outward benefit, may lead to bad results. Teach a child to love learning for itself, and try to present it in such a way that it cannot but love it.

D'Alembert, says Sir James Mackintosh, congratulated a young man very coldly, who brought him the solution of a problem. "I have done this to have a seat in the Academy," said the young man. "Sir," answered D'Alembert, "with such motives you will never earn one. Science must be loved for its own sake, and not for the advantage to be derived. No other principle will enable a man to make true progress." Those who love the young should feel this. Vir-

tue should be pursued virtuously, and so should learning. Let the teacher then, if he thinks it best to give rewards, do so with serious reflection, and in doing so strive to teach morality.

Public exhibitions may have an immoral tendency. What are they intended for? To show the real progress the school has made? Then let them be a fair specimen. If, at a public exhibition, scholars repeat what they have for five or six weeks been drilled upon, that exhibition only shows what the scholars can do after a six weeks' drill. If scholars repeat over some ten pages of a book, which are the only ten pages they really can repeat, and give it to be understood that that is a specimen of their knowledge of the whole book, it is immoral. If the most thorough scholars are picked out as a sample of the whole, that also is immoral. Indeed, in as far as an exhibition holds out an improper specimen as the true one, in just that proportion it must have an immoral tendency. And the same principle that prompts it, would prompt the farmer to put the best wheat at the mouth of his sack, and a tradesman from the richest sample to sell his poorer merchandise.

I have taken these three, Punishments, Rewards, and Exhibitions, to show that they may each have a moral or immoral influence upon the

young mind. Other parts of school discipline might be taken up in the same way, and it would be seen how each and all are constantly changing for better or worse, the character of the pupil. There are certain insects that become like the leaves and berries they feed upon, and it is thus with the child's mind ; it will be tinged with the evil or the good that is about it, and for this reason, every thing in the school should be anxiously looked into.

Let us now inquire into the teacher's duty, and see in what manner he may watch over the moral nature and attend to its spiritual culture.

First, he should feel that he is working for a great end. This would give vigor to the best powers of his mind. He should concentrate his thoughts in his daily labors, feeling that his influence may reach into eternity. He should see in the young beings before him spirits whose destinies are to endure for ever. He should see Innocence just beginning her race, looking forward for the conflict of life. He should see a confidence which may lead to harm, an honesty which may be wronged, and hopes which may be blighted. This will give a subdued ardor to his feelings, and an unassuming earnestness to his actions which will win for him the love and confidence of all.

Entering upon his work with the right purpose, the teacher will seek to understand his scholars, and become acquainted with their minds. This is a high moral duty. The child's capacity should be studied. The same progress should not be expected in every scholar, neither should it be thought that they all can excel in the same studies. God may have imparted to one a retentive memory, and to another original powers of thought. There are some who are of quick perception, and whose minds soon ripen, and yet perhaps those of slower development may be found in the end to have made greater progress. The capacities of children vary not only in degree, but in kind, and thus the study of the various capacities is a most important duty, and one lying at the very root of spiritual culture.

The disposition should be studied. This is also a moral duty. Many a noble nature has been injured, by having been misunderstood. Boldness is never superior to modest worth. Forwardness is not smartness, and many who have a quick tongue, may have an empty head, and a bad heart. Some children need to be encouraged, some checked ; some should be led, and perhaps a few driven. The teacher should study the disposition and the capacity of the scholar as closely as he wishes them to study their books.

He will then work with Nature and not against her. The dictates of Christian morality teach us to have a proper respect for the peculiarity of every individual. Providence had probably a wise meaning in the formation of every mind, and in putting down one, and raising up another, we should do it with great care.

The Example of the teacher may lead many to improvement. Every teacher teaches always. His actions are a living lesson. He may thus be continually spreading around him his own virtues. Let the teacher then be mild, modest, good. Let him cherish virtue in himself and respect it in others. Let him embody the true Christian principles, and in every exercise and act, in every word and deed, some good will go forth from him. If there is a sphere in which a pure Christian example will be likely to produce on the minds of others a permanent influence, it is in that of the teacher.

The teacher might in almost every study excite moral feelings by direct teaching ; by questions, by hints and conversation. His own heart, warm with generous emotion, and filled with the deep and ardent love of virtue, will see, in the most common thing, something to awaken inward life, and will rejoice to impart it to others. Thus will goodness be shed into their young minds

like the soft beams of the sun ; and truths, and principles be awakened which may endure for ever.

Care should be taken in selections for Reading and Declamation. An interesting account of noble self-sacrifice, or deed of virtuous daring, may inspire them to higher exertion. The beauty and harmony of creation, the wisdom of God's Providence, the great interests of man, and such subjects, will ever give delight to the young mind and prepare it for future good. The lives of distinguished men might be listened to, and the greatness of their characters tested by the Christian rule ; thus the baseness of the tyrant, the blood-tracked career of the conqueror, and the pure devotion of the true patriot, might be viewed in their proper light ; and the great spirits of good men, martyr-philosophers, and heaven-guided philanthropists, would be worthily reverenced and loved. Those things, that some worldly-minded men look upon as very trifling, may in the end produce stupendous results. They may awaken in the heart a mighty power to wrestle against evil, and to pass triumphantly through the trials and vicissitudes of life. We cannot look too carefully to these sources. They may lead to great good, and do vastly more than one would at first imagine.

There might be books upon the subject of

morals, which could be regularly studied in connexion with other branches. It is true that a book of rules will not necessarily make a virtuous mind, but it may lead to it. It may prepare the way. At a proper age the use of money might be explained, and its connexion with the great principles of selfishness and benevolence. Its true nature might be shown, that it is not a good in itself, but only a means, and hence the wisdom of having the end founded in virtue. The nature of rents and wages might be morally shown, and the relative duties of the rich and poor, the farmer and manufacturer, the citizen and the government. The design of law might be spoken of, and the duty of giving it due reverence. All these things, and many more, are intimately connected with true morality, and might be usefully taught in our schools.

We have considered some of the reasons for and against Moral and Spiritual Culture. We have looked at our school system in its present state, and pointed out some of the improvements that might be made, and the moral duties of those who enter upon the office of teacher.

From what has been said it will be seen that the office of teacher is a high office. This is true. There is probably no office on the face of the earth more important. The celebrated

Dr. South, in a sermon preached as long ago as 1650, says, "I look upon an able, well-principled schoolmaster as one of the most meritorious subjects, in any prince's dominions. Nay, I take schoolmasters to have a more powerful influence upon the spirits of men, than preachers themselves; forasmuch as they have to deal with younger and tenderer minds, and consequently have the advantage of making the deepest impressions; it being seldom found that the pulpit mends, what the school has marred." This view is as true now as it was then, and is perhaps as little felt. The office needs in itself to be greatly raised in the opinions of men. Its wide-spread influence should be more deeply reflected upon. It has been our schools that have given joy to the firesides of New England. They have imparted intelligence to our statesmen, and wisdom to our laws. Even as they are, they have produced an effect upon the character of the people. The work of the schoolmaster is everywhere; others have worked upon matter, he has worked upon mind. He has influenced the spirit, and guided the character. "Give me," says some one, "the schools and the schoolbooks, and by-and-by I will have both the churches and the courts of law." The teachers of our land are moulding the future destinies of the people.

They are putting their stamp and seal to the future character of the nation. They are turning the wheels which will presently move a coming generation. Surely then there is no office on earth which is more important.

And if the office is so important, it should be well filled. Every teacher should be both wise and good. If high moral worth is needed anywhere it is in the teacher. There is no sphere under heaven where a pure heart, and a sense of accountability to God, are more necessary than here. There is no place where skepticism might more cunningly breathe its venom, or virtue unfold truth. There is no place, then, which calls for nobler powers, or a more discriminating sense of right. No one should fill the office who does not wish his own soul to aspire towards God.

No one should teach for mere money. Taking a school is something more than a matter of bargain. The work should be entered upon as the ministry is entered upon, with a feeling of sanctity. The teacher must teach because he loves to teach, and because he is thus fulfilling a high duty. The community should give liberal remuneration to teachers ; but still the teacher should not keep his eye on the silver and gold. A higher purpose, a more lofty end, should stir his heart. When the Old Athenian found that his armor-

bearer served him for money, he exclaimed, "Give me back my buckler, since you serve me for that, you are no longer worthy to bear it." So we may say of that teacher who cares for no more than the salary he receives.

The teacher should not say, How much can I make, but, How much can I do. He should be a devout man, one who can love the faith, and affection, and simplicity of children. He should be one

> "Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
> Can still suspect, and still revere himself
> In lowliness of heart."

He should think of the troubles, and sorrows, and adversities of life; its joys, its griefs, and temptations, and seek to fit the young mind to go through them with Christian trust. He should, in the beautiful language of Wordsworth, be one

> "Whose high endeavours are an inward light,
> To make the path before him always bright;
> Who fixes good on good alone, and owes
> To virtue every triumph that he knows;
> Who with a natural instinct to discern
> What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
> Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
> But makes the moral being his prime care."

This, it seems to me, is the ideal of what a teacher should be, and the nearer he approaches it, the more worthy will he be to fill his office, and

the more likely to benefit the children under his care.

On the part of the public, the office of teacher should be respected. The intelligent and virtuous should place the teacher on his true elevation. His vocation should be treated with the reverence and dignity it deserves. Perhaps the reason why there has been a deficiency in this respect, is, that the most important part of instruction has been so much neglected. If it be so, then let the community place a nobler charge under his care, and, while he watches over the moral and spiritual nature, they should give a proportionate respect to his office, and honor his sacred trust.

Again, no just compensation should be thought too great to secure the labors of competent minds. We ought to have men of the first talent and of high moral worth. Money is a small consideration in comparison with this. Let every parent then have an open hand. If we would have teachers throughout the country of the firmest principles and most elevated minds, the community must be liberal.

And this is not all. The parent must have an open heart, as well as an open hand. He has a further obligation than paying the quarterly account. He must coöperate with the teacher.

He must advise with him. He must make him his friend (for surely no parent would put his child with one whom he would not call his friend). This will give power to the teacher's mind. It will add to his usefulness. It will enable him to educate with more advantage the minds which will now look up to him with greater affection.

The teacher should as much as possible make his occupation a permanent thing. It should not be considered as a mere stepping-stone to something else, a mere halting-place between youth and manhood, between the college and a profession. Teaching should be a profession in itself.

It would be well if we had Seminaries for teachers.* In Prussia there have long been such

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* Since the above was written, (through the efforts of the Board of Education and the indefatigable labors of its secretary, Horace Mann,) such seminaries have been established by the Legislature of this Commonwealth; and their advantages in qualifying teachers, and elevating the standard of instruction, must, by all who have examined the subject, be clearly seen. One word in reference to the Board of Education. This Board was organized in 1837. It has no authoritative power. It can suggest any plan it may wish, but enforce none. It has no funds at its disposal, so that by no power invested in itself can it misuse any fraction of the public money. Thus is the Board confined in its operations to the simple power of gathering information, and laying it

institutions, where every effort has been made to render the teacher worthy of his station. Does not the duty of teacher call for as careful a preparation as law, or medicine, or divinity ? It would no doubt do much to promote Moral and Spiritual Culture in our schools if good seminaries for this purpose were established.

This Institute is doing much to awaken the community to the importance of the subject we are now considering. Since its first establishment its lectures have breathed a true spirit. May it go on doing more and more to elevate

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before the community ; of discovering defects, and making them known ; of devising improvements, and suggesting them to the good sense of a reflecting people, to be accepted or rejected as they may think proper. Still, notwithstanding the exceedingly limited power of the Board, it has had its strong, not to say bitter, opposers. Since the organization of the Board, the labor accomplished, and the good realized, have been amply sufficient to encourage its warmest advocates ; and yet some have attempted to crush it, even in the very successfulness of its efforts. Its Reports have been widely circulated at home, and republished and commended abroad ; and yet an Act was absolutely brought before the House of Representatives to abolish the Board, and thus frustrate at once its noble designs ! The Act, we rejoice to say, did not pass ; — while the information which was brought before the public most clearly proved that the objects of the Board, and the laborious efforts of the Secretary, are worthy the support of every philanthropist and sincere lover of his country.

the tone of public feeling. May it declare, in the strong eloquence of truth, the deficiency that still exists, and strive, by unwearied effort, so to present its facts and its arguments as to arouse every thinking mind to vigorous action.

This great subject rests, after all, with the religious sense of the community. Moral and Spiritual Culture will be attended to in the same proportion as the religious spirit grows deeper in the public mind. And each advance that is made should be welcomed. Were a child merely to vegetate, had he merely his limbs and his five senses, then, indeed, it would matter less; but when we feel his connexion with God, and the sublime and excellent prospects to which the Infinite Father has called him, then the value of Spiritual Culture is more realized. The future and the present unite, and we see eternity looking through time. The immortal stands by the mortal, — the visible by the invisible, and we feel the comparative value of each. It is this view that opens, in its whole length and breadth, the importance of our subject. We see that in some measure eternal issues are hung upon it. It has to do with all the relations of life. Man's duties to himself, his family, his country, and his God. — All, all, will be more or less affected by the moral direction that is given in the early stages of

education. May the time come when this will be acknowledged and felt. May the day be near when the thousands of children throughout our land will be instructed in sound morality, that they may have purity of heart, good principles, and enlarged views of duty.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

God bless thee on thy path of life,
And keep thee pure as morning dew,
And midst the clouds of earthly strife,
May sun-bright visions meet thy view.

Seek ever that which should be sought,
And may the influence of each hour
Unfold some golden bud of thought
Into a bright and perfect flower.

Love Nature ; — she will feed thy mind
With heavenly hope and pure desire ;
And lead thee in thy soul to find
The flashings of celestial fire.

Guard well that soul, and feel how rich
Thou art in such a boundless trust,
A Mine of Thought, compared with which
The wealth of kingdoms is as dust!

Gaze upward through the heavens afar,
And let Faith guide thy inward sight,
For thou shalt shine, a living star,
Amid that firmament of light!

Then through this scene, by mortals trod,
With hope, and fear, and watchful care,
True to thyself, and to thy God,
Press onward with unceasing prayer!

ON THE BEST MEANS OF EXERTING A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE IN SCHOOLS.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE TEACHERS OF BOSTON.

1839.

"It appears unaccountable that our teachers generally have directed their instructions to the head, with very little attention to the heart."

LORD KAMES.

THE BEST MEANS OF EXERTING

A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE IN SCHOOLS.

THERE is nothing that tends so much to throw interest and sanctity around the place of instruction, as the moral and spiritual influences, which may there be imparted. All the branches that are usually taught, are, no doubt, of great importance, but they bear relation mostly to time; while that which tends to affect the character, and unfold the higher spiritual powers, connects itself with other worlds, and prepares the immortal spirit to become one of the seraphim at the throne of God.

When these influences are connected with Education, the teacher becomes as an ambassador from heaven, and the school-room, a sphere where the purest and most exalted minds delight to labor, — where they find ample room for their

efforts, in imparting lessons of noble morality, and uttering divinest truth. The moment we should prevent the teacher from exerting these influences, we should narrow his work, and his office would become shorn of all its original greatness. It is, no doubt, essential to teach a child to read and write ; but it is also essential to teach him to reflect, and to love truth. Mere knowledge does not necessarily lead to goodness ; nor enlightening the intellect, to improvement of heart. A child may stand high as a scholar, who would not scruple to tell a falsehood ; and those who gain the greatest number of school honors, may become the worst members of society.

This fact is beginning to be felt. It has awakened much reflection and is leading many to more enlightened views of Education. The defects in our present system have called out many strong remarks ; and (as is the natural tendency in such cases) there has been, perhaps, unqualified censure. In considering the vast importance of exerting a good moral and spiritual influence, some have spoken as if there were no such influence now ; as if the present system had only a sort of skeleton deadness, or at best, but mechanical life; as if our teachers had no faith in the soul, and thought the noblest exercise of the mind was, to "dot and carry one." Such a view is unjust.

There is much in our present system, that is elevated and holy in its character. There are many places of instruction, which are associated in the minds of the young with all that is dear and sacred ; and many teachers go to their work as if commissioned from above, and feeling that they are throwing around them influences which will live through the unending ages of eternity.

It is wrong to underrate what is now doing. We have among us, both in our private and public schools, some who are exceedingly faithful, devoted to the cause of education. They are splendid examples of what all teachers should be. When they go to their work their hearts kindle with quiet enthusiasm. They ask for no higher sphere. They know that there is no higher sphere. They look with awe upon the mystery of the child's being. They look with love upon these little creatures of God. Faith, to them, draws up the curtain of the future, and they see the temptations and trials — the joys and sorrows, through which they must pass. Nay, more, connecting time and eternity, they glance through ages ; and then, looking again upon the young immortal, they desire to buckle on to his young limbs the whole armor of God, that he may stand in the evil day, struggling triumphantly with the powers of darkness, and gaining, in other worlds, a crown of unfading glory.

To such teachers, the quiet scenes of the school-room are full of intense pleasure, of prayerful effort, of sublime hope. They may not speak in tones of extravagance, of what they are doing. There may be a modest stillness in all their acts, but in the depth of their hearts exist the right feelings, and this gives a character to the simplest things which they do.

All teachers are not, however, of this description. There is a gradation from this, down to the most cold-hearted and time-serving pedagogue, who looks upon the young with jealous suspicion, has no faith in their spiritual nature, and cares for little more than the money he obtains.

Of these latter, we trust there are few ; and we may well hope, that, as higher views of Education become common, even these few will have a new life, or change their sphere of action. If the best teachers look with awe upon their responsible trust, how should every unhallowed hand drop from this ark of the Lord !

Even as things are, there is reason to be thankful that so many good minds are engaged in this work, and that so many good influences are shed abroad. In the mean time, those who fulfil their duties best, will be most anxious for continued improvement ; and will be among the earliest to

embrace any wise measures for exerting, still more widely, moral and spiritual influence.

With regard to the importance of the subject, abstractly considered, it may be taken for granted, that all present are convinced. The question then comes up as to the means ; — " What shall we do ? and how shall we do it ? "

Is it best to have stated hours of the day, when moral and spiritual subjects shall be taken up ? To this, I see but one objection ; it might become a formal and mechanical business ; without life, and hence, without advantage. Nay, if it becomes habitually mechanical, the subject will be rendered dull, and perhaps disgusting. If a teacher opens the school with prayer, by taking out a prayer-book, and reading a prayer without feeling ; if, at the striking of the clock, a class is called out, and a set lesson in morals is recited, this will do but little ; indeed, it will probably be an evil. But if the minds of the children can be solemnized for prayer, by some introductory remarks ; if the teacher, from a glowing heart, can supplicate God ; if an hour can be devoted to conversation upon some moral law, or some spiritual truth, then great good may follow. To the question, then, " Shall there be a certain portion of time set apart for the purpose ? " I should say, If it can be entered into heartily, and not otherwise.

To the question, whether the teacher should strive to exert these influences at all times, I should answer, Yes. Whether there are stated times, or not, a teacher should always, indirectly, shed around him the lights of truth and virtue. They should not be fastened on to the present system, but naturally flow through it, like the vital stream. And here there should be caution; for a person may reiterate good maxims till they become irksome; he may sermonize until he wearies. Any thing like cant becomes repulsive. Let what is said, be simple, and come from the heart. The true way is, to say but little at a time, and let that be in season. If the teacher makes a few remarks (the natural expression of feeling) about the beauty of a flower, or the loveliness of Nature, it is better than if he had made a formal speech. It is by well-timed and well-directed words that the most can be accomplished.

The next question which arises, is, "Should there be text-books?" Such books are of great value, but, perhaps, they are more valuable for the teacher to study at home, than to have in the school-room. Most books that have as yet been published, are good, principally, as affording hints which the teacher may apply as he thinks proper. Free conversations are better than printed dia-

logues. Take the idea as it exists in the child's mind, and strive to unfold it. Let the conversations grow out of surrounding circumstances. It is not desirable to exclude text-books; for if there were good books, they might be made of incalculable advantage; but even while there are not books unexceptionable in all particulars, the books that we have are of great value to be studied by the teacher in private. In this way, the experience of others can be gained; and would it not be well for teachers to have in their library whatever books there may be of this nature? Todd's, Abbott's, Wayland's, Gallaudet's; Phrenological or Transcendental; on Morals, on the Soul, on Nature, on Revelation. Let them be read and studied; the good retained, the bad rejected. Even that which does not answer the wishes of the teacher, may suggest to him a good he might otherwise never have found. Text-books, in this way, will be to the teacher of immense importance; and I believe that this is the way, in which they may generally be used to greatest advantage.

Allow me now to offer, for your consideration, a few hints, which may assist some in diffusing a right influence.

Be not suspicious. Cultivate charitable feelings. Look at the bright side. Do not under-

rate the intentions of the scholars. Do not take it for granted, that they act from low motives. It is better to believe that a child does right, till you absolutely know the reverse, than to suspect him while innocent. A good teacher "thinketh no evil, hopeth all things, is not easily provoked."

Do not tempt to deception. This may be done in many ways. First, the scholar may be asked respecting a fault, in such a way as to require great moral courage, on his part, to tell the plain truth; — such questions should, if possible, be avoided. Secondly, a scholar may be placed in such a situation, as that, in the nature of things, he will be liable to deceive. A teacher should therefore consider the weakness of the child, and place him where he will be least exposed. And, again, the child may be tempted to deceive, by seeing the teacher deceive.

If the teacher has any sly ways of detecting boys; if he stands with his back to them, that he may turn suddenly round; if he leans upon his hand, appearing to be absorbed in contemplation, while he is watching between his fingers; in fact, if he does any thing which is cunning or deceptive, it teaches cunning and deception to the child. If, for instance, the school is drilled upon particular questions, selected here and there, as the 5th, 8th, and 18th, so that when the committee

comes, the school may appear well; and the scholars, before them, are asked, (as if at random,) the 5th, 8th, and 18th questions, giving it to be understood that these are a fair sample of their general scholarship; — this teaches deception. It is a practical lesson, not soon forgotten. A teacher should lay aside every artifice; and, in all cases, be scrupulously sincere and upright; — fair and honorable in the minutest particular, transparent as the thinnest crystal.

Do not exact too much; for this will tempt the child to deceive, besides being in its nature unjust. Young children are, by nature, restless; if then you require them to sit quite still beyond a proper time, it becomes irksome, and they watch their opportunity, that when the teacher's eye is away, they may turn and whisper. Might there not, with advantage, be some relaxation? This has been tried with success, in some of our largest public schools. After a length of silence, and close application, the bell unexpectedly strikes. "Scholars," says the teacher, "you have been quite still; now for a moment's relaxation, and then to our work again. Rise .... turn three times .... hold up your hands .... now clap them .... draw in a long breath .... now give the sound of the vowels." The bell again strikes, all are down. "Now, scholars, see how indus-

trious you can be." Every mind is at work, and all is still.

Be not sarcastic. Some teachers have a natural tendency to say things which cut through a child's heart like a knife. A scholar makes some mistake ; instead of a simple reproof, comes a tone of ridicule. The child feels wronged. One is stung into revengeful passion, another crushed with despair. I do not think a child should ever be mimicked, even for a drawling tone, without explaining beforehand that it is not for ridicule, but to show in what the fault consists ; while that scorching sarcasm which some teachers use, should be wholly abolished. It tends to call up bad passions, and to engender bad feelings, in the child's mind, towards the teacher, and all that he does.

A teacher, in order that he may best exert a moral and spiritual influence, should be familiar and gentle. There is, no doubt, a dignity that is essential in the school-room, but it need not partake of arrogance. True dignity must always be connected with simplicity. Children are keen observers, and they either shrink from artificial austerity, or smile at it as absurd. A teacher who should walk about his school, with a domineering manner, might talk about moral and spiritual truth till he was weary, and do little good.

To produce much good, a teacher must win the confidence and love of the children ; and to do this, he should, in his manners, be natural and gentle.

So with the tone of voice. If a teacher is sharp and crabbed in his speech, if he calls out with dogmatical authority, he shuts up the hearts of the scholars, and the spell is broken ; — "they will not listen to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." A subdued manner, and a low, kind tone, will work wonders. Some always speak in the imperative mood. "Fifth boy, second division, bring your book this way." Another says, "Master Howe, will you bring me your book ?" Now, both boys know they are to obey ; but the first does with some degree of scorn, what the other does cheerfully. Who would not rather be asked than ordered ?

Teach the children to be affectionate to each other ; to have kind feelings, without envy or jealousy ; that difference in dress makes no distinction ; that they should be as a band of brothers, bound by the tenderest ties of love. "The older scholars, (I use the words of a friend, who is the instructer of a most excellent school,) the older scholars should be taught to feel a deep interest in the younger ; to watch over them as sisters, and to feel a responsibility for their happi-

ness and improvement. I know from experience that this can be done ; for nothing binds me more strongly to my school, than this feeling of sympathy, which so sweetly pervades it."

Study a child's capacities. If some are naturally dull, and yet strive to do well, notice the effort, and do not censure the dulness. A teacher might as justly scold a child for being near-sighted, as for being naturally dull. Some children have great verbal memory, others are quite the reverse. Some minds develop early, others late. Some have great power of acquiring, others of originating. Some may appear stupid, because the true spring of their character has never been touched. The dunce of the school, may turn out, in the end, the living, progressive, wonder-working genius of the age. In order to exert the best spiritual influence, we must understand the spirits upon which we wish to exert that influence. For with the human mind, we must work with nature, and not against it. Like the leaf of the nettle, if touched one way, it stings like the wasp ; if the other, it is softer than satin. If we would do justice to the human mind, we must find out its peculiar characteristics, and adapt ourselves to its individual wants. In conversing upon this point with a friend, who is now the Principal in one of our best grammar schools,

and to whose instructions I look back with delight, "your remarks," said he, "are quite true; and let me tell you of a little incident, which bears upon the point. Last summer I had a girl, who was exceedingly behind in all her studies. She was at the foot of the division, and seemed to care but little for her books. It so happened, that, as a relaxation, I let them at times, during the school hours, unite in singing. I noticed that this girl had a remarkably clear, sweet voice; and I said to her, 'Jane, you have a good voice, and you may lead in the singing.' She brightened up, and from that time, her mind seemed more active. Her lessons were attended to, and she soon gained a higher rank. One day, as I was going home, I overtook her with a school companion. 'Well, Jane,' said I, 'you are getting along very well; how happens it, that you do so much better now, than at the beginning of the quarter?' 'I do not know why it is,' she replied. 'I know what she told me the other day,' said her companion. 'And what was that?' said the teacher. 'Why, she said she was encouraged.'"

Yes, here we have it, she was encouraged. She felt that she was not dull in every thing. She had learned self-respect, and thus she was encouraged.

Some twelve or thirteen years ago, there was in the Franklin school, an exceedingly dull boy. One day, the teacher, wishing to look out a word, took up the lad's dictionary, and on opening it, found the blank leaves covered with drawings; he called the boy to him. "Did you draw these?" said the teacher. "Yes, sir," said the boy. "I do not think it is well for boys to draw in their books," said the teacher, "and I would rub these out, if I were you; but they are well done; did you ever take lessons?" "No, sir," said the boy, his eyes sparkling. "Well, I think you have talent for this thing; I should like to have you draw me something when you have leisure, at home, and bring it to me. In the mean time, see how well you can recite your lessons." The next morning, the boy brought a picture, and when he had committed his lesson, the teacher allowed him to draw a map. The true spring was touched. The boy felt that he was understood. He began to love the teacher. He became animated, and fond of his books. He took delight in gratifying the teacher, by his faithfulness to his studies; while the teacher took opportunity to encourage him in his natural desires. The boy became one of the first scholars, and gained the medal before he left the school. After this, he became an

engraver, laid up money enough to go to Europe, studied the works of the old masters, sent home productions from his own pencil, which have found a place in some of our best collections of paintings, and is now one of the most promising artists of his years, in the country. After the boy gained the medal, he sent the teacher a beautiful picture, as a token of love and respect ; and while he was an engraver, the teacher received frequent tokens of continued regard ; and I doubt not, to this day, he feels that that teacher, by the judicious encouragement he gave to the natural turn of his mind, has had a great moral and spiritual effect on his character.

The next suggestion I would make, will be more or less directly connected with Punishments.

A teacher should never plainly accuse a scholar of a fault, where he is not positively certain that the fault was by him committed. If the teacher imagines it was by him, he may question him, and tell him what he fears, but he should not absolutely accuse him, unless he knows that the boy is guilty.

Never punish solely on the testimony of another. Better that the boy should escape a merited punishment, than receive a punishment he does not deserve, through testimony which may have been prompted by private ill-will.

Never resort to corporal punishment, when other punishments will answer. A teacher in one of our public schools, found that several of the little children were restless and disposed to whisper. He punished them a number of times, till finally he said, "I do not see that you grow any better. Children, why will you not try to do as well as you can? I wish you to come to me every day, for a week, after the school is over, and tell me how you think you have behaved." He has found that children who were not prevented from whispering, and making disorder, by the fear of punishment, are prevented by being made their own monitors.

When corporal punishment must be resorted to, let it never be done in anger. Let the child feel that it pains you, as much, at least, as it does him; that it is done in sorrow, and for his benefit. And would it not be well that such punishments should be administered in the absence of others? The presence of companions, generally awakens feelings of obstinacy, whereas if the boy is alone, and has been spoken to kindly, and has had opportunity for reflection, it will probably be more to his advantage. Let the conscience of the child be appealed to. Lead him to feel from an inward witness, that he deserves punishment; and, above all, to fear wrong, more than the punishment of wrong.

Once more ; If a teacher finds that he has punished unjustly, let him candidly own himself in the wrong, and, as publicly as the punishment was given, so publicly let the acknowledgment be made. A teacher will never lose any dignity or influence by acknowledging a fault. On the contrary, he will thus teach the scholars that he loves truth, and that that shall govern him in all things. He will show his love for justice, and thus give a lesson which may be of lasting benefit.

Having considered the subject of Punishments, let us now consider the Amusements of children. As a means of exerting a moral and spiritual influence, these should be attended to. They generally do much to form good or bad habits, and often leave a lasting effect upon the character. Children enter into their amusements with their whole heart, and a teacher should always feel a sympathy with them, as long as their amusements are innocent. The character of a child may often be more fully discovered, in his plays, than at any other time, and a teacher who wishes to understand the individual characteristics of a child, must know something of his sports.

The teacher of Sir Isaac Newton thought him a dull boy ; he would have understood him better, if he could have watched him at his play, and seen him joyfully absorbed in making curious

mills, and setting mice to turn them. And so also with Sir Humphrey Davy ; he cared little for books, but took delight in trying experiments, and in roaming the country for minerals.

If we would find out the hidden springs of a child's mind, we should know something of his plays. We may often there, better than elsewhere, see the secret impulses of his being. Ferguson, when a boy, would lie, by the hour, patiently on his back, and with beads, upon a thread, measure the distances of the stars ; while the fiery genius of Schiller was manifested by his passionate fondness for the beauty and majesty of nature ; by climbing the pine during the thunder-storm, and gazing into the tempestuous sky, to see whence the fire came.

Thus the true foreshadowing of the child's character may be seen during the hours of recreation, when the mind freely follows out its natural desires ; and, as there is then the first shadowing forth of the character, so then will any false step work the most evil. When the tender bud first unfolds, the slightest mildew may blast it. When the small fountain first bubbles up, one drop may poison its waters.

The child who joins in demoralizing games, or who joins in innocent games, with demoralizing companions, may easily be led astray. John

Bunyan was, in this way, nearly ruined, and Richard Baxter came near being a gambler; while many, perhaps, who might have been a Bunyan or a Baxter, have gone down to their graves gray in iniquity, never having been led to retrace their steps. "The lessons that are thus learned in youth often reach inwards to the very core of being."

Henry the Fourth of France, was found by an ambassador, at romps with his children. "Are you a father?" said the king, "if you are, I will go on." Of course, this could not be followed by the teacher; but he may, at least, show some sympathy with children, in their guileless mirth. I know there are practical difficulties in attempting to do much in this respect in many of our schools. Still it is possible that something may be done. There may be some games of so rough a nature, that they tend to excite the passions, and lead to anger, coarse language, or profanity; there may be other games which tend to excite a gambling spirit, and the teacher may show wherein these are bad, and how they would operate, if, instead of buttons or marbles, they should stake large amounts of property. He might show that it is the same thing, in principle, to pitch coppers, as to pitch guineas. I have known a teacher in one of the highest public schools in

this city, in the winter, on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, join in skating with his boys; another, who, when there was a holiday, would take the boys who wished, on a ramble into the country; and last summer, the head teacher of one of our grammar schools, met many of his children in the mornings, before breakfast, on Copp's Hill, where they walked about, and sang hymns. He found that their eyes sparkled the brighter for it, and that in school hours, they were more devoted to their studies.

Thus, if the teacher will feel an interest in the amusements of his scholars, and lead them to abstain from all except those which are pure, even in their recreations, their good feelings will be called forth, and their very hours of pleasure will expand and beautify their sweetest affections.

The interest that the teacher feels in a scholar should never be confined to the school-room. Many an opportunity for exerting moral and spiritual influences will be lost if the teacher is thus limited. In the street, and in the dwelling, the teacher should show himself the friend. A smile and a kind word, will be long remembered. If a child is led to believe that all you care for him, is for your own reputation, that you care not for his improvement, any further than he happens to be your scholar, and that the school committee will

judge of you, by him, the respect and affection of the child is checked, and in the same proportion, you lose your influence.

If a child is ill, in as far as possible, the teacher should visit him. I know that this is a great claim upon a teacher's time, and that in large schools it cannot always be done. But to some degree, it can be done; and when the teacher cannot go, some scholar may be sent. There are in this city, some teachers of public schools, who exert a wonderful influence in this way. In visits among the poor, I have been delighted to hear parents and children speaking with gratitude and love of the teacher's calls. "Certainly," they say, "he is one of the kindest men we ever saw, for he comes right in, and asks with so much feeling, how we all do." The poor remember such things, and their hearts are made happy.

There is still another thing, though I hardly know how far it can be carried. There may be a bond of sympathy between the day school and the Sunday school. I know some children, who have brought a line, addressed to the Sabbath teacher, stating that through the week they have been good; and their little hearts have throbbed with delight, as they handed it to the teacher. No silver medal could have pleased them more, while the influence was, I believe, unspeakably

better ; for the child was led to feel that the day-school teacher respected the Sunday-school teacher, and the Sunday-school teacher was interested in the doings of the week ; while there was also a good opportunity for the Sunday teacher to make such remarks as might guard the child against wrong feelings, and encourage him in the right.

I should say further, that where it is possible, all teachers of day schools should become teachers in Sunday schools. This, some might say, would be making the teacher's labors interminable, and certainly be going beyond all bounds of moderation.

So it might well be thought, if it was not a known fact, that the teaching on the Sabbath, instead of a labor, becomes a refreshment to the mind. In the Sunday school with which I am connected, we have six teachers who are engaged in teaching every day through the week, and these teachers are among the most devoted, indefatigable teachers, we have in the school. Through summer's heat, and winter's storms, they come with delight. Now it is impossible that such teachers should not carry the spirit of the Sunday school into their week's labors. Like the traveller, who, in passing through a spice grove, carries with him, long after, the fra-

grance, so will they, from those blessed sanctuaries of the Lord, carry the spirit of holiness.

The points already dwelt upon will greatly retard, or accelerate, the moral and spiritual influence of the teacher ; but I would go further. I have said, there might be objections to set times, but such teachings might be introduced more or less directly, at all times. For instance, in the study of geography, suppose a scholar were reciting a lesson on Greenland, how aptly might the teacher speak of the wild deer who live there, and ask the children where they imagine these creatures find food amid those perpetual snows ; and then tell them of the delicate moss which grows beneath the surface. In speaking of Africa, he might allude to the foot of the camel, as adapted to the desert sands ; and thus with every place on the face of the earth, the child might associate some new evidence of God's goodness and wisdom. At times, the seasons, and their varied peculiarities, might be spoken of. Bring in flowers, or a bird's nest, pick up a feather or a straw ; indeed, nothing can be found but what may suggest some important spiritual lesson, and serve as a text-book for natural and interesting remarks.

Or, further, suppose a boy happens to find

something in the street, and you say you wish to ask all a question. "I should like to have you give me your opinion on this subject; James Smith found a dollar, and he said, 'I'm glad I've found it, for I shall give it to my mother, to buy wood.' 'You ought not to do that,' says Richard, 'because it is not yours.' 'And what makes you say so?' says James, 'for I found it, and William Jones found sixpence the other day, and he said, "Finders are keepers;" and besides, my mother wants wood, and I heard her say, this morning, she had no money to buy any.' Now, scholars, what should you say, ought to be done? Ought James Smith to keep that money? What reasons can you give, why he should keep it, and what why he should not?"

Here the scholars might give their opinions, and then the teacher might give his. He might go into the principles of the thing, and he might close by showing, that this money perhaps belonged to such or such a one; for instance, James Smith, by making inquiry, might find that the money belonged to a poor girl, the child of a widow, and that it was the pay for making so many shirts, and that she intended to purchase with it some conveniences for her sick mother.

Or, again, conscience may be spoken of, and questions put to the scholars. Do infants have

a conscience? Do the bad? Does the conscience ever sleep? Does it ever die? Have you ever felt it? Have you ever read about it? Can you tell any stories or facts about it? Will it go with the soul to another world? and so on.

Or the teacher may go upon more philosophical ground, and show the child the influence of the Inward and the Outward; show him that every man makes his own world; that as a man thinketh, so is he, and so is all that he looks upon.

Here is a tree bearing fruit, and three men stand near it. The first man smacks his lips, and says, "Delicious fruit!" thinking of nothing but his own appetite. The second admires its beauty, and exclaims, "How splendidly the fruit hangs among the green leaves, while the blue sky shines through the branches!" "How good, and how beautiful!" says the third; "I thank God that he thus mingles beauty with use, and strives to make his children happy. There is a neighbour round the corner, who has been quite ill, this three weeks; I will try to purchase some of that fruit, that I may take it to him."

Here is the man of appetite; the man of taste; and the man of devotion and benevolence. They all look at the same tree, do they not? and yet

they have as different feelings as if looking at three different trees, in so many distinct planets. And let these three men go all over the globe, and gaze at the same objects, and all the while they see things in as different a light, as if in three separate worlds.

Or, again; two men live in a valley, full of singing birds, and luxuriant foliage. One loves God, and, filled with calm joy, feels as if in paradise; the other has, in this very place, committed a murder; to him, it is as a hell; the music stings his ears; the foliage is spotted with blood, and the sighing wind sounds like the gasp of the dying. These men stand in the same valley, yet the one sees beauty, the other, gloom; the one is happy, the other wretched. This is the power of the Inward over the Outward. This is ever yman's making his own world. And so always, with the virtuous and the vicious; the one says, "Who can show us any good?" The other exclaims, "The earth is full of His riches!"

Thus, you may take a thousand questions, and unfold them to children, and awaken thoughts which will never perish.

I would have teachers study the heart, and try to implant right motives; to go to the very root, and establish sound principles.

Outward goodness is a mere shell. It is the

shadow of a shade. There must be something within, or it has no substance. Such goodness will only follow Religion, like one of John Bunyan's characters, while she wears her silver slippers. Such goodness falls in the hour of temptation. It reminds one of the Oriental tale spoken of by Lord Bacon, where a cat was changed to a lady, and she did very well, and behaved very lady-like, till a mouse ran through the room, when she fell upon her hands and feet, and chased it. So with children; if their goodness is only an outward thing, when temptation comes they will down and follow. Give them right motives, sound principles, and they will be firm. In after life, the dashing waves of affliction may howl around them, but they will stand serene amid the tempest.

Luther once said, "Men are not made truly righteous by performing certain actions which are externally good; but men must have righteous principles in the first place, and then they will not fail to perform virtuous actions."

The true teacher will strive to enlighten the conscience, and set before the scholar motives that will endure;—to awaken feelings of honor, a love for truth, and a supreme desire for the highest excellence.

Some may say, "This sounds well, and may

be very true in the abstract ; but in our schools such a state of things could not be brought about." I am aware there are great difficulties. But what is good in theory, we should strive to make good in practice. Besides, much of what has been spoken of, has already, in some schools, been put in practice. In one of the public schools in this city it is not uncommon for girls, who, in moments of thoughtlessness, have committed faults, to go up, after the school is over, and voluntarily give information concerning themselves, to the teacher. In this, their only reward is a feeling that they have acted honorably, for they are marked, and thus suffer in rank. At other times, when certain scholars have been reproved, others have, from a sense of right, held up their hands, and, when called upon, stated that they had, during the week, committed the same fault ; and they felt, that they, in justice, must suffer also.

At one of the private schools, where there is an interesting group of little girls, whose teacher diffuses a spiritual influence through all that she does, it is her custom, at the close of the quarter, and especially on the last day of the year, to tell each scholar what she considers her particular failing ; and what she hopes each one will strive to amend during the year. These are always occasions of interest, and she has found them to be

productive of good. In this school, was a little girl about eight years old. She was a child of great natural ability, kind-hearted, and of great strength of purpose ; but she had no control over her feelings. Naturally of a nervous temperament, the least thing excited her, and caused her to fall into the most violent passions. She would stamp with anger, and, for a time, appear unconscious of what she said or did. On the last day of December, as the teacher in turn addressed each scholar, "O, what good things," said she to her, "I should hope of you, if you did not yield so to your feelings. How I wish that before the close of another quarter, you may have learned to control your temper, for this destroys your own happiness, and that of those around you."

She made no reply, but seemed deeply affected. The next morning, it being New Year's day, many of the scholars came running in with some simple offering of affection. This little girl stood looking at them for a moment, and then, throwing her arms around her teacher's neck, she whispered, "I have no present to give you, but I bring something which I know you will like as well." "And what is that?" said the teacher, "A firm resolution to govern my temper," was the reply ; "and I know I shall succeed, for I am not trying in my own strength, I have asked God to help me."

From that day, until the close of the quarter, not once did that child give way to her temper; and, although the blood would often rush to her cheek, and the tear start to her eye, yet she resolutely controlled every expression of passion.

During the present lecture, many suggestions have been offered, but they have been offered principally as suggestions. What will do for one will not do for all. Each must judge for himself, and every one must have plans growing out of his own nature. Mr. Abbott may keep the best school, and he may write the best book; but if any man takes Mr. Abbott's book without Mr. Abbott's spirit, he will not keep a school like Mr. Abbott, though he follow the rules ever so strictly.

The great thing, after all, is the spirit of the teacher. The teacher, in order to inspire his pupils with a love for truth, must be inspired with a love for it, himself. As Sir Philip Sidney said to the poet, "Look into thy heart and write," so may it be said to the teacher, Look into thy heart and teach. He who governs himself best, will probably govern his school best.

Before I close, I wish to speak of an objection that arises in the minds of some, to the spread of moral and spiritual influences in our schools.

They fear the schools will become sectarian. But, can we not distinguish between our own doctrinal views, and the vital spirit of Christianity — the universal soul of religion? I suppose that all could unite in singing the hymn the angels sang at the birth of Christ, and all could listen to such sermons as our Lord's sermon upon the mount.

It seems to me, that any intelligent teacher could speak upon ten thousand subjects, without betraying to what sect he belonged. He could speak of all the Christian graces. He could speak of the power of prayer; of the love of God; of the beauty of holiness. He could, with his whole soul, urge them to be pure in heart, and to hunger and thirst after righteousness. He could speak of the beautiful and sublime truths of ethics and natural religion. He could instruct the young in all the duties they owe to society. He could teach them, while developing their intellectual nature, the importance of strengthening their higher powers, and keeping their lower propensities in subjection. While all nature is one vast laboratory, full of wonders; while all history is one interminable crowd of good and bad examples; while the human soul is gifted with such hopes and fears, passions and aspirations; the teacher will surely have ample scope, without touching upon his own doctrinal opinions. Let him speak

of love to God, and good will to man, and then, without infringing upon private views, he will be to the children, what the Law was to the Jews; "a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ."

The name of God is whispered in the wind, woven in the leaves, crystallized in the rocks. Every thing speaks of Him, from the grain of sand to the rolling planet. Why, then, in a universe so vocal with the praise of God, should the teacher be dumb? Why, when the meanest reptile that crawls in the dust of the earth bears witness to the goodness of Jehovah, should the teacher, gifted with speech, remain silent? Shall he speak of the law of gravitation, as if it were a law by itself? of nature, as if nature were all? The wide world is as God's presence-chamber. The laws are his will, and nature is his work. Let, then, the child see that the teacher feels this; let the teacher bow down with awe, and the child will bow down also.

Then will the teacher feel that he has room for the highest powers of his nature. Then will he reverence his profession. Then will he go among his fellows, and feel not one whit abashed. Among merchants, and artists, and statesmen, he will walk erect.

Then will the humblest teacher of the most humble school feel a joy in her vocation. Though

she is poor, and her children are poor, her work is a noble work, and not only honorable, but blessed before God. Though the little flock should be collected from garrets and cellars, though the children are clad in the coarsest garb of poverty, they are the lambs of the Great Shepherd, and may be made worthy to be numbered with the first-born of the church, and prepared to become fellow-citizens with the saints for ever.

THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD.

[Göthe relates, that he met, in the Campagna of Rome, a young woman nursing her child, seated on the remains of an ancient column. He questioned her on the ruins with which her dwelling was surrounded. She was ignorant of every thing concerning them, being wholly devoted to the affections which filled her soul; she loved, and to her the present moment was the whole of existence.]

Temples, and monuments, and crumbling fanes,
Altars, and broken shafts are scattered round:
Ages long past have sanctified these plains,
And stamped this sacred spot as classic ground,
While Art and Genius here their home have found! —
But see! where those old sculptured marbles rest,
A mother clasps her infant to her breast;
She seeks not here to learn what minds unknown
Carved these immortal forms in breathing stone;

She smiles in joy upon her infant fair,
And that sweet babe, to her glad spirit, seems
Holier than sculptured forms or poet's dreams;
And in such bliss, oh! wherefore should she care
Who reared those shafts, by whom those towers were piled?
The present fills her soul — her heart is with her child!

INFLUENCE OF HOME.

"To neglect beginnings, is the fundamental error into which most parents fall."

LOCKE.

"I, too, acknowledge the all but omnipotence of early culture and nurture; hereby we have either a dwarf-bush, or a high-towering, wide-shadowing tree."

CARLYLE.

INFLUENCE OF HOME.

In the very idea of Home there is something sacred. The influences there exerted must sink peculiarly deep, and their effect, in after years, for evil or for good, must be as abiding as life. Go where we may, over the wide world, the thought of home vibrates through every feeling of the heart. Unnumbered and varied as our experiences may be, we shall ever trace the thread of existence back to the cradle of infancy. The poor Laplander, though amid the luxuries of the South, sighs when he thinks of his snow-covered hut. The wealthy Merchant remembers when he was a penniless boy ; the Statesman when he climbed his father's knee, and heard him tell of the olden times ; and the Mariner hangs over the vessel's side, and pictures, even in the wave, the early play-ground, and sees, in imagination, the mother who welcomed his return from school. Never through life do we forget the influences of our early home. Even in old age, when the

events of yesterday pass from the mind, memory brings up more freshly than ever the scenes of early days. It is a curious fact, that, with the infirmities of advanced years, the extremes of life seem to meet ; as if, through the circling present, we passed round, and were permitted to look in again upon the days which have gone. We gaze, —and there, like a buried city, now uncovered, we behold every familiar thing ; our very foot-prints in the sand, and the places where we carved our names. And as the recollections of home are abiding, so they are peculiar. There is a feeling of tenderness with which they are ever associated. Even in cases where children have been treated with severity, or even cruelty, there is probably a general feeling of tenderness, which, in after life, will associate itself with that spot. Who then shall describe the feelings of those whose early associations are all happy, and hallowed by the memory of paternal love ?

Kindness should reign, as a presiding Genius, over the sacred interests of Home. The holy ties of love should bind all together. Fear may be made to yield a reluctant obedience, but it is affection which flies with spontaneous joy and even anticipates our wish. If a parent would see a generous sympathy running through the domestic circle, he must cherish such a sympa-

thy in his own heart. Love begets love. When a young spirit meets with sternness and severity, it shrinks as if smitten by frost ; when it is cherished in kindness, it expands like a flower in the sun. Parents, then, should cultivate a feeling of kindness which will throw serenity over their life. It may be healthy and robust, natural, manly, free, but let it also be sincere, delicate, and refined. In some there are natural tendencies to be morose and petulent, selfish and sour. Such feelings should be controlled. They are poisonous. They are contagious. They are deadly. Some mingle these feelings with love, and consider one an antidote for the other. They rush to extremes. First correcting and then caressing, now lavishing indulgence with inconsiderate fondness, and now rebuking with sarcasm, or administering punishment in the heat of ungoverned passion. A calm and well-balanced affection should dwell in the parent's heart ; a wise and far-seeing love, which knows when to yield, and when to withhold. Such a love, having its source in the soul, will diffuse itself through the whole character, and will manifest itself in those thousand small attentions, which, though they can hardly be described, add greatly to the pleasures of life. An irritable temper has thrown a shadow over numberless homes, and has, no doubt, driven

many a son to desperation and ruin. While a peaceful and happy home has proved a tower of strength, from which the shafts of evil have harmlessly fallen, as from a wall of steel. Every one, who wishes to make home what it should be, will always respect the feelings of others, and extend a just charity even to their failings. They will seek to be agreeable as well as good, and cherish that true kindness which awakens confidence and ease in those around. Love is a plant of heaven, and, when grown, on all its branches bears celestial fruit.

It is important that home should be cheerful. Kindness will do much to make it so. Yet there may be a kindness which is sad. There are those who have a melancholy tenderness, and those who have a hard, austere affection. Love may be in their hearts, but their countenances are set like a flint. We are rejoiced to meet kindness in almost any form ; but here we are ready to exclaim, as did Macbeth at the sight of Banquo's ghost, — " Take any form but that ! " Cheerfulness is a positive virtue. Who does not feel every drop of blood thrill in his veins, when he sees Paul writing, even in a dungeon, " I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content " ? Truly was Paul chief of apostles. He had indeed learned that " godliness

with contentment is great gain." Yet, are there not many who seem wilfully to look on the dark side, to search peevishly for flaws, and, when they have no real troubles, torment themselves with those which are imaginary? Such "dig out their own wretchedness as if they were digging for diamonds." They would do well to remember, that "the chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex one, and in prudently cultivating an undergrowth of small pleasures, since very few great ones are let on long leases." That was a good remark of Seneca's when he said, "Great is he who enjoys his earthenware as if it were plate, and not less great is the man to whom all his plate is no more than earthenware." Every home should be cheerful. Innocent joy should reign in every heart. There should be domestic amusements, fireside pleasures, quiet and simple it may be, but such as shall make home happy, and not leave it that irksome place which will oblige the youthful spirit to look elsewhere for joy. There are a thousand unobtrusive ways in which we may add to the cheerfulness of home. The very modulations of the voice will often make a wonderful difference. How many shades of feeling are expressed by the voice; what a change comes over us at the change of its tones! No delicately-tuned harp-

string can awaken more pleasure ; no grating discord can pierce with more pain. The softer accents should receive cultivation, not as a matter of mere artifice, but as a true medium of refined feeling. "If your concern for pleasing others arise from innate benevolence," says the Spectator, "it never fails of success ; if from mere vanity, its disappointment is no less certain." Have you not heard voices which lingered in your memory like music ? Which soothed the mind in sorrow, and threw cheerfulness over every scene ? This is not simply a natural sweetness, but a refinement we can all possess by cultivating the better feelings of the heart, and by giving them true expression. Anger, spleen, discontent, envy, pride, arrogance, all have their expressive tones ; and so with love, gentleness, generosity, joy, and the better feelings of the heart. They are serene as the notes of the lute floating over a summer's lake ; or they may tear and torture the spirit by their unkind accents. The very birds give vent to their natural feelings, in characteristic cries, from the cooing dove to the screaming vulture. Let, then, home be made cheerful by the gentle voice of affection.

Much cheerfulness can also be thrown over the domestic circle by manifesting a generous interest in the doings of each other. Are there not

parents, who become so engrossed in their own affairs, that they hardly enter into the feelings of their children? who know little of their amusements, and as little of their studies? who interchange with them perhaps a passing word, but in regard to their higher interests manifest complacent unconcern? How can there be, in such a circle, delicate sympathies? How can there but be coldness amid such vexatious reserve? All seems like a garden where the earth is laid out and every thing is duly prepared, but where it seems to have been said, as of the mountains of Gilboa, "there shall be here neither dew nor rain!" Parents should look with unfeigned interest upon the pursuits of their children. They should mingle with them both in chastened pleasantry and in serious debate. They should, by cordial fellow feeling, do away with that heartless formality, which too often exists, and become the faithful guardians of the advancing mind. There may be instructers to aid, but parental responsibility cannot be transferred. The school may do much. But alas for the child where the instructer is not assisted by the influences of home. The parent should superintend both the intellectual and spiritual culture, and all who assist should be but as co-workers. This is alike a privilege and duty. But if the parent should not be pre-

pared to do all he might wish, let him do all he can. Let him manifest what he feels. Let him share his sympathy with those who aid, and his willingness to coöperate. Are there not parents who lay upon others the whole burden of mental culture, and who have little or no fellowship with those who undertake it? Are there not those who leave the imparting of religious truths to strangers, and are willing they should remain strangers? And ought these things so to be? Happy the child whose first religious impressions are gently instilled by parental care, and who sees that those who afterwards aid in this holy work are looked upon with respectful and affectionate regard. Such feelings, on the part of the parent, will throw sun-light over the young heart, and make a cheerful home.

Parents should be consistent. There should be harmony between precept and practice. The child notices the life, and before its keen vision every mask becomes transparent. Words may be but articulated breath, but deeds are generally the facsimiles of soul. Advice counter to example must always be suspected, for we are certain both cannot be true. When childhood weighs character, it weighs both remarks and actions, throwing a word into one balance and a deed into the other. We must be careful lest the deeds

outweigh the words. The eye of childhood is attracted by the life. Example is like statuary ; it is thought sculptured into form ; the eye dwells upon it ; the memory recalls it ; the imagination broods over it ; its influence enters the soul. Parental example becomes incorporated with the child's understanding. He cannot forget it if he would ; if it is good, it blesses ; if bad, it tyrannizes. The parent may die, but as long as the memory of that parent lingers in the soul, the example cannot be forgotten. Let life, then, be an unblemished picture, a beautiful and consistent whole.

It was Göthe who said he would have around him the busts of great men, that their illustrious virtues might inspire him to kindred effort. How much more might we wish to be surrounded by such living examples in those we love, that the memory of their actions might excite us to a holy endeavour. Home should be the abode of sincerity, of truthfulness. There is much in the world of seeming. Affectation is deceit. Every home should be a castle of truth.

The actions of home should be based on Principle. Some parents may feel that elsewhere they will be on their guard, but at home they will follow their impulse, they will unbend and let nature have her way. A good impulse

may have its way at home or abroad, but at home there is no special license. Virtue knows neither latitude nor longitude. The same sense of honor and right, which guide us in more public life, should guide us in the domestic circle. Some are more lax at home ; they act there from whim, from prejudice. We should act from principle everywhere ; in our most private walk, as in our most public career. Let domestic life be in harmony with the beautiful and everlasting laws of truth.

Once more ; let there be means of intellectual and moral culture within reach ; let there be books, pleasant books, inviting, instructive, and good. Let them be of easy access, that they may be taken up at leisure moments. Let them be of such a character that to them the young mind will fondly turn. Genius is doing much in our day to enrich the literature of the young, and who shall estimate the result ? " Every book which a child reads with intelligence, is like a cast of the weaver's shuttle, adding another thread to the indestructible web of existence."

Thus much we have said concerning the idea of Home. Has its influence been overrated ? Is it not here that the child is first greeted ? Is it not here that the earliest and deepest impressions are made ? — impressions, which, as was

said at the beginning, will endure as long as life. It is related of the philosopher, Dr. Brown, by Sir James Mackintosh, that while his mind soared through every region of poetry and thought, his heart clung to the hearth of his father, and to the children who shared it with him. "He was one of those men of genius, who repaid the tender care of a mother by rocking the cradle of her reposing age. He ended a life spent in searching for truth and exercising love, by desiring that he should be buried in his native parish with his 'dear father and mother.'" Such feelings are not uncommon: as Cowper has beautifully said:

> "This fond attachment to the well-known place,
> Where first we started into life's long race,
> Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
> We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day."

And speaking in a letter of his mother, who died when he was a boy, he writes, — nearly fifty years after her death, — "I can truly say that not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her, such was the impression her tenderness made upon me."

What can be more touching than to see genius, after it has awakened the admiration of the

world, tenderly cherishing the scenes of early days, and the memory of a mother's love. And what an evidence does it give of the indestructible nature of early influence. Even the vicious, in their downward path, have been arrested, by memories which have flashed over them. Shame has filled their minds at the thought of their present degradation, and they have wrenched asunder their chains. The recollections of the past have risen before them, and the immortal plant, which has suffered by blight and storm through many dreary winters, has at length burst forth in the bloom of life. The vitality infused into the soul of the child may long slumber, and a word, a look, in after years may call it forth. Such is the influence of Home. It is said by Plutarch that there was an ancient city, where words were congealed when spoken, but that after a time, they thawed and became audible. So the parent may often speak words which at the time may be unheeded, yet in after years, in the summer of life, they may thaw out, and the mind will then understand their meaning, and listen to their accents as to the sweet voice of an angel.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his last days, wrote thus, — "The prayers of my childhood are yet precious to me; and the simple hymns which I sang when a child I still remember with delight."

Thus when we throw holy influences around the young,

> "We sow seeds
> To blossom in their manhood, and bear fruit
> When they are old."

Ever, then, be it remembered that Home is sacred. That here, more than elsewhere, its character is formed. That the influences of the fire-side, the power of Parental example and of Parental counsel will go far to effect the destinies of the immortal soul. Now is the grand era, the creation-day of Futurity. Now and here will that be done which can never be undone. God in His mercy grant that it may be done wisely.

THE POOR BUT GODLY MAN,

OR

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

A German Legend.

"See, see, a simple countryman
With walking staff in hand comes now;
Coarse is the garment he has on,
Yet noble is his form and brow;
Thank God I sing! so I can raise
A proud song to the brave man's praise!

BURGER.

'T was where an ancient forest waved,
And ink-black rivers rolled;
There lived within a lonely hut,
A pious man and old;
And Demons came to him by night,
And tempted him with gold!

The poor old man was coarsely clad,
And in that dreary spot,
'Midst wasting poverty he lived,
By all the world forgot;
Yet well he knew a Godly life
Would sanctify his lot!

And there, at quiet eventide,
When all was dark and still,
And evening shades, and twilight mists,
Slumbered on lake and hill,
Thick clouds, of grim, unearthly smoke,
His lonely hut would fill!

And through the smoke a shapeless form
Moved darkly to and fro;
And offered him caves of buried wealth,
If he with him would go;—
But alike to all his proffered gifts,
The poor old man said—"no!"

Then did the Demon's blasted brow,
Grow black with fearful blight;
His eye-balls glowed like coals of fire,
And shot out sulphury light;
The very fiends would stand aghast,
Before so dread a sight!

Then the old man took God's blessed book,
With meek and reverend air,
And read of Jesus on the tree,
Before his children there ;
And, with a calm and pious trust,
They knelt in solemn prayer.

And as they prayed, the Demon quailed,
And his gaze became less wild,
His arm hung palsied at his side,
And his fiery eye grew mild,
Till he stood amid that holy scene,
As powerless as a child !

And when they rose from off their knees,
They stood in the room alone,
For that meek prayer in heaven was heard,
And the tempting Fiend had flown ;
And a faint, sweet light, like the smile of God,
Throughout the dwelling shone !

Thus day by day, and year by year,
The old man watched with care,
And at the stated twilight hour,
The shapeless Form was there,
But the poor man girded himself — with truth !
And conquered the Fiend — by prayer !

And day by day, and year by year,
The prayer worked with new might;
For every time the Demon came,
His form changed to the sight,
Till at length, instead of a wicked Fiend,
He became a Child of Light!

And when at length the old man died,
And the sod o'er his form was pressed,
His soul had treasures in heaven laid up,
And his spirit in Christ found rest,
And the Angels of God all welcomed him,
And numbered him with the blest!

CULTURE OF THE IMAGINATION.

"Mind, mind alone, — bear witness earth and heaven! —
The living fountain in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime."

AKENSIDE.

"The faculty of Imagination is the great spring of human activity, and the principal source of human improvement."

DUGALD STEWART.

CULTURE OF THE IMAGINATION.

It is undoubtedly true that no faculty has a greater influence over the whole character than the imagination. And when we reflect upon its importance, it is not a little interesting to notice its first development. It manifests itself more early, and with greater vigor, than most of the faculties. It is seen in the morning of life, and is one of the most striking and beautiful traits of childhood. Let us consider its history, — its dangers, — its advantages, — and the importance of its true culture.

No one can have studied the amusements of the young without having been impressed by their ideality. It is the very life of their souls, and is manifested in all their doings. They make the happiness they enjoy. They see analogies, which, when expressed, constantly take us by surprise. Their perceptive and creative powers are a perpetual source of delight. A few cards, a pile of

sand, will supply them with ample material for building cities, laying out farms, establishing churches and schools. A few crooked sticks will stand for men and women, and from these will come weddings and funerals ; joy and sorrow will mingle in the scene, and the young beholder become absorbed in the world of his creation.

That quaint old writer, Thomas Fuller, relates a curious incident, which is truly characteristic, and shows how fancy will put life into young limbs. A gentleman, he says, having led a company of children beyond their usual journey, they began to be weary, and jointly cried to him to carry them ; which, because of their multitude, he could not do, but he told them he would provide them horses to ride on. Then cutting little wands out of the hedge as nags for them, and a larger one for himself, they mounted, and those who could scarce stand before, now, full of mirth, bounded cheerfully home.

The life of a child is dramatic. The scenes are shifted to suit its own fancy, and the personations are ideal. Countless illusions are invented and enjoyed. The wooden doll is fed, is sent to school, returns, and is examined. Imaginary interviews take place. Dialogues are carried on. Articles of clothing and dress are purchased, and all form a source of inexhaustible pleasure.

The mere simple outline of a picture is instantly filled out by the fancy. The rudest sketch is seized upon, and any thing of the burlesque is the object of indescribable mirth. It has been well observed, that while a highly finished picture may for a moment arrest the attention of an animal, we might endeavour in vain to fix his eye by a mere outline ; yet this very outline, even though unlike the actual figure in many respects, will excite instantly the admiration of a child and fill him with delight. To the young mind this faint resemblance is enough to put all its faculties in motion, to send the mind inward upon itself, and call forth its powers in mentally completing the picture. Thus a drawing, having any resemblance whatever to any creature or form which a child has seen, will be recognized, and generally with greater pleasure, because something has been supplied by the imagination. This, and the fact of their power to throw their own minds into other persons and things, thus holding soliloquies and dialogues, is worthy of much reflection. It is a most interesting manifestation of the wise arrangements of God and of the character of the newborn soul. It is a constant source of self-created pleasure. It is a spontaneous action of the mind, and it is a joy, not so much physical as intellectual. It is the natural operation of thought. It is

the result of observation and memory manifested through the imagination. It is the outworking of the spiritual powers, gleaning what they may from the elements around, — from the simplest material, gathering information and joy ; and throwing over the rudest object some hue from their own glowing conceptions.

This same power of imagination manifests itself in connexion with curiosity. When any form is presented, if there is more than meets the eye, the imagination commences its work, and curiosity wishes to see if its imaginations are right. When it sees an effect, it asks for a cause, and if none is given by reason, imagination endeavours to fill its place.

Imagination shows itself also in early life in the stories which generally please the young. They love the marvellous, and with joy give themselves up to the supernatural. They enter with curious step the kingdom of dreams, and gaze with charmed attention upon the wildest and most shadowy phantoms. They can explore in thought mysterious caves, and walk through gardens of enchantment. Giants and dwarfs are, with them, no impossibilities, and magic rings and flying horses seem not too magical or too swift for their thoughts. They can follow the adventurous Don Quixote, or walk the sea-side and build

boats with Robinson Crusoe. Who has not noticed the rich exuberance of the imagination in the young; who has not mused upon the remembrance of it in himself? Ideality is like an atmosphere about the child. It is the law of its nature. We cannot extirpate it if we would, and were it possible, it would be a serious loss. "So far as I have observed," says a deep thinker, "children deficient in ideality are either stupid, or malignant, or sensual, or all three together; and it is a well known fact, that the finest understanding and the noblest dispositions have been distinguished in childhood by the richness, force, and exuberance of this element of our nature."

We have thus far dwelt more particularly upon the manner in which the imagination first manifests itself. We have looked upon the fact of its early development. Let us now inquire into its dangers.

Every power of the soul may be abused. Its highest faculties may be debased, and rendered ministers of evil. So the imagination may become morbid. It may be unduly strengthened, to the neglect of other powers. It may become the dupe of every extravagance, hurrying the mind into foolish superstitions and exciting it with romantic follies. It may crowd darkness with a thousand frightful monsters, and fly in

terror before the forms of its own creation. It may become the creature of caprice and passion; feeding the mind with fastidious refinements and gorgeous dreams impossible to realize. This may do harm to the child, and lay the foundation of misery in the man. The evils flowing from an ill-regulated imagination are too numerous to be mentioned and too terrible to be conceived. But let it not be inferred that imagination itself is an evil. We well know, that by abuse, the greatest blessing may be turned into a curse. "A powerful and unbridled imagination," says Sir Walter Scott, "is the author and architect of its own disappointment. But the Giver of all talents, while he has qualified them each with its separate and peculiar alloy, has endowed the owner with the power of purifying and refining them."

The imagination is native to the mind. Its growth is, to a great degree, spontaneous. What is particularly needed is guidance. Give it this, and it becomes to the soul a tower of strength and a crown of glory. This power, properly brought forth, will awaken our most benevolent and gentle sympathies. It will quicken all our higher perceptions, multiply our sources of enjoyment, and give us a power to appreciate genius, whether in the orator, the poet, or the artist. This is the true spring of genius itself, and none

can have genius save in connexion with this divine power, this precious boon of Heaven. We would say no more than is strictly true, but, looking at this subject with the eye of sober reason, we do feel that the evil brought upon an individual when this faculty is neglected, or is in an unhealthy state, and the pleasure and advantages which may be derived from its sound and well-balanced activity are too great to be passed thoughtlessly by.

"Mere imagination! mere imagination!" some exclaim, and lay the whole subject aside. They consider that its light is light which leads astray, and that its influences are adverse to the duties and labors of life. Let us for a moment seriously consider this, and see if the right culture of the imagination is inconsistent with practical effort, or the most laborious activity. Is it true that a strong imagination unfits one for the homely duties of this "working-day world"? Is it true, except in cases of a diseased imagination? We have before said, that this faculty may become morbid; but in a well-developed mind, the imagination, so far from being at war with the practical, adds strength to the sinews and imparts new energy for the faithful performance of duty.

There is an imagination which magnifies and distorts, but this is most generally found among

the worldly and time-serving. A true imagination gives us nature in its freshness ; it brings before us the distant and unseen. And when it calls up ideal forms, it calls up such as are in harmony with nature, and true to the wants of the soul. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," and the imaginative power has been imparted by the Almighty to supply this want.

We may have the most exquisite taste, the most delicate perception of beauty, the most refined sentiments, and yet be indefatigable in labors, which, to a common mind, would seem repulsive ; and the reason is, that a truly refined mind, if quickened by the Christian spirit, will not dwell on the surface. It will see defects, but will strive the more to bring order out of chaos. A keen perception of beauty will look for moral beauty, and if it has been baptized into the religion of Jesus, it will yearn to awaken every mind to the beauty of holiness.

Imagination is the handmaid of Faith. One reason why preachers produce so little effect, is, no doubt, partly because there is so little vividness in their own conceptions, and partly because the hearers' conceptions are so dull. The spiritual world has to them little reality ; it is too vapory and dream-like. So with the idea of Christ,

there may be an indistinct, hazy splendor, yet still all seems obscure, and is seen, as through a glass, darkly.

The divine Teacher was not satisfied with abstractions. He embodied all his truths in pictures, and allegories, and parables, for the imagination; and so should all teachers, who would arouse the soul. Coleridge speaks of imagination as "the power which first unsensualizes the mind"; and Cecil declares it to be "the grand organ whereby truth can make successful approaches to the mind." If this power exerts such a vast influence, it should be made an auxiliary to religion. By it we may disenchant the soul. The Bible is a perpetual appeal to this faculty. It is a gallery filled with pictures. Herein is the secret of Eloquence: — close argument, combined with graphic description. This will move the reason, and kindle the affections. This will arrest the attention, and cling to the memory. This will bring the abstract idea before the mind as a reality, in a living and breathing form. Then may reverence, admiration, gratitude, and love spring into action. This power is alike necessary to the orator, the poet, and the artist; and not only to them, but to all who would appreciate them. To understand the sentiments of any writer, it is requisite that there should be a kindred spirit on

the part of the reader. If, then, we would derive the advantage that comes from the study of the most exalted works of genius, we must cultivate this power.

Again. One reason why men are so insensible to the claims of humanity, why they do so little to relieve the sufferings of the destitute, or to cause light to be diffused among the ignorant, is because they have in their minds no living picture. They may have some dim, abstract notion, but they do not see anything as a reality before the mind's eye, and therefore they do not realize what is needed. Nothing can give greater energy to the philanthropist, or more move the benevolent, than the power of entering, in thought, into the situation of others. In our lonely hours, in our evening meditations, in our noon-day walks, we may in our minds see the forms of the sorrowing, the woe of the oppressed, the moral desolation of the sinful. It is this which will touch the deepest springs of the soul, awaken the noblest sentiments, and lead to the most untiring exertions.

The true culture of the imagination does not lead to sentimentalism, but elevates the mind above that which is selfish and sensual, and quickens it into spiritual life, till it glows with charity, and delights to exercise itself in self-denial, and in a wise zeal for the good of others.

It is true there should be caution in the culture of the imagination, as in everything else. It should be our aim to unfold all the faculties of the mind, and to let the soul have ample breadth and elevation in which to exert its powers.

"But," it may be said, "imagination loves the marvellous, and why, in this world of commonplace scenes and duties, should we suffer the mind thus to wander?"

It may be answered, that one of the greatest evils which can befall us is to look upon the daily scenes and duties of life as dry and commonplace. We are surrounded by the marvellous on every side; may we not behold it in our daily walks, in the works of nature, in the ways of Providence, in the word of God, in the depths of our own being? If so, why should the marvellous be shunned? Rather let our eyes be opened that we may wisely behold it. Let us consider well the problem of life, reflect upon time and eternity, joy and sorrow, measure the varied powers of the soul and its sublime destiny, turn from the finite to the Infinite; then may we see that all is marvellous, and our hearts will rejoice in the beauty and glory of creation, and repose upon the bosom of God, as upon the bosom of a loving parent; and then in our minds will perceptions of ideal beauty, and the love of practical usefulness be harmoniously combined.

There may be a marvellous which is monstrous, unnatural, distorted. But there is also a marvellous which is of God. It enters into all things, and clothes all with imperishable beauty. It is an emanation from the Fountain of Life. In him we live, and move, and have our being. And thus all around us, connected, as it is, with God, should fill us with wonder, reverence, and trust. Is it not as important to feel and study this, as to gain wealth? Is nothing good and practical but what can be weighed and measured? Oh, there are high wants in the soul! The mysterious spirit within is constantly overleaping the senses. It has an inward eye and an inward ear, and a living power which loves to gaze upon the beings of its own creation. God has seen fit thus to empower the soul. Is it well to cut it off from its noble birthright, its peculiar privilege?

Has not the soul from of old peopled nature with her own forms? Did not men from the beginning see spirits by the streams, and upon the hill-sides? Where now are the old traditions? Where are the mystic notes that floated on the wind, and the superstitions which filled the mind with sacred awe? Like the shadows that rested under primeval forests they have passed away.

" The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The Power, the Beauty, and the Majesty,
That had their haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms and wat'ry depths : — all these have vanish'd ! "

Vanished ! — and we would not, if we could, recall them ; — The soul, which first peopled nature with these beautiful spirits, is true to herself. It was the imagination which at first beheld them, and she will behold them still, or sink into the coldness of skepticism, or rise into the truer and more beautiful conceptions of a Christian faith. There is a soul in nature, the energy of God giving to all life and beauty ; and the mind, when of old it wandered amid the leafy halls of nature, when it stood under the boughs of the forest surrounded by shadowy twilight, when it heard the sweet murmur of the stream, and gazed down into its crystal depths, naturally caught faint glimpses of the universal and indwelling life, and peopled space with separate existences. Let us not smile at the simple wisdom of our fathers. There was a shadow of truth even in their errors. Truer far to believe in spiritual existences, than to believe in nothing but the dead elements of earth and water. But we may see, through all, the manifestations of Divine love, the presence of the Universal Soul, who clothes the lilies of the field,

and watches the sparrow in his flight. The presence of God with his works, and the reflection from nature of the soul's own life, was the source of the mind's belief in the supernatural. The Mind not only lives, but, as it were, imparts life. It throws its own feelings into nature. It sympathizes with the expanding flowers. It sees love, and joy, and fellowship among all growing things, and these feelings take form, so that the mind not only feels but sees. It embodies its own idea, and gazes, in thought, upon "what it half perceives, and half creates." This led of old to a belief in the supernatural, and gave rise to ancient superstitions. But while the superstitions have passed away, the supernatural remains. Amid the works of nature, —

> "Who has not felt
> A presence that disturbed him with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

Who has not realized that in the natural we may commune with the supernatural? that in every particle of matter there is somewhat which cannot be analyzed by the crucible or the air-pump? and that over the vast whole is a spirit of love, and wisdom, and power? There is something

more than mechanism, there is the present Deity. Thus nature leads us above itself, to that which vivifies and controls it. And here we have the supernatural operating in calm and beautiful regularity, but not the less supernatural because serene and uniform. With the extension of Christianity, superstition changes to Faith. Science enlightens ignorance, and Revelation pours her divine light over the world. But as the mists rise and roll away, the marvellous yet remains. The fantastic, the wild, the superficial dies, but the soul is still in the presence of spirit, surrounded by mysterious life, but life in which it can confide; life which is one with reason and love. All is guided by Mind, and that Mind looks upon the soul with paternal affection. Thus under the broad sky it walks beneath a Father's roof, and in gazing upon the humblest weed, or in looking upward upon the myriad systems which circle through space, we still see that these are the objects of a Father's care. And, in addition to this, perhaps the soul may be justified in going farther, and believe that

> "Spiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

Certainly such a belief is any thing but inconsistent with Revelation. Is it not expressly stated

that "there are ministering spirits sent to minister to those who are heirs of salvation?" And when Christ was on the earth did they not minister to him? Earth is as near to heaven now, as it was then, and if the veil of sense were withdrawn, who shall say that now and here, we might not behold the spiritual world, and angels looking upon us in tender affection? It is well known that God throughout the material world acts by means of secondary causes and subordinate agents, and also that there are many inferior creatures descending in regular gradation beneath us. Why may there not be intelligent orders above, and why may not the Divine Mind permit them to aid us in their unseen missions? However this may be, mysterious processes are ever going on, which the highest wisdom of earth cannot fathom; unexplained phenomena, the secret workings of Jehovah, which call forth the reason, the faith, and the imagination of man. Let it not be objected, then, to the true culture of the imagination that it may love the marvellous; for the marvellous is an essential part of the universe; it is interwoven with life, and the mind that does not realize this, cannot yet have looked deeply into the great problem of existence.

In reflecting upon God, upon life and spiritual things, the imagination should not take the place

of reason. They should go together, they should work in harmony.

"But," it may be said, "granting that it is true that there is much of the marvellous in nature, we need not embody it in tales of fiction; this is unreasonable, unhealthy, and calculated in every way to do harm. Give us plain common sense, and let the spirits and genii be for ever forgotten. They unsettle the mind, fill it with false notions and superstitious fears, and give any thing but true ideas of the real world, or the active duties of life."

With this feeling there are those who would discard from literature every thing connected with the supernatural. They would carefully prohibit every book, on the title-page of which might not be written, "Founded on fact."

Now, that there have been many wild and crude productions, absurd in every feature, and fraught with evil, no one will deny; and that very many books for the young, which were popular in a former day, have been justly thrown aside, all will allow, but still that every thing alluding to the supernatural should be excluded from the reading of the young, is, we think, going much too far. All must allow that such a work as Bunyan's, which binds the minds of young and old as with a magical spell, is calculated both to delight

and spiritualize the mind. Let us then look for a moment into this subject, for it is one of no small interest.

There is a supernatural which might more appropriately be termed anti-natural ; — it is ridiculous, inconsistent, preposterous. But there is a supernatural which is the true heir of Genius, and child of Reason. It is not actually true, but it is true to itself, and true to the soul. It does not desert nature, but takes nature along with it. It is not exactly one with common sense, nor yet its antagonist. It revolves serenely and brightly around it, as the earth around the sun. The understanding does not quite assent to it, and yet it gains the love of the heart, and charms even the understanding. Such a supernatural has laws of its own. The poetical belief in it is connected legitimately with the human mind, because that mind is connected with a higher life. This power of the soul is a prophecy of what the soul is to be. It is a foreshadowing of coming events. As the day is foretold in the morning, so is Eternity in man. The immortal capacities are here beginning to expand. The creative faculty has already commenced its work. The Infinite Being projects worlds and systems in space ; so does the finite creature project ideas in time. His ideas take form and live as a separate existence.

He presses forward into the kingdom of Thought, and the spirits of his own creation seem to spring into being. And at such a moment the soul may be exercising its most rational and godlike powers. No one feels, in perusing the works of Milton and Shakspeare, that the supernatural is unnatural; for in their noble productions, reason and imagination are one; they flow together, they blend like light and heat. Warburton says, in speaking of the amazing powers of Shakspeare, "He soars above the bounds of nature, without forsaking sense." Thus he makes the natural and supernatural harmonize. And so with Milton; we float with him as he soars on expanded wings over time and space, and look down upon his ideal world with as clear a vision as upon a neighbouring landscape. Fiction need not be altogether false; as the soul looks through the eyes, so may truth shine through a fable. Poetry may be truer than History, and the wondrous story which leads to a shadowy land may pour over us splendors from heaven. When Coleridge saw Chantrey's admirable bust of Wordsworth, he remarked, "It is more like Wordsworth than Wordsworth himself is." It represented not his mere features, but his character, his genius. It was not Wordsworth the companion, but the poet, his country's glory. And so

we may say, almost without paradox, that fiction may be made truer than truth ; for it may embody more spiritual ideas than a dry recital of facts.

Let us not, then, be deceived ; a recital of every-day facts may be inwrought with false sentiments, based upon evil principles, and made to appeal to the worst tendencies of the mind ; while within magic caves, and surrounded by fanciful extravagances, we may be brought in contact with substantial good. High thought, pure emotions, and a spiritual faith, may thus be imparted. The reverse is, of course, also true ; it only shows that we must look deeper than the surface to study true effects. May we not come, then, to this conclusion ? — books which appeal to the imagination are good if they are of a true character ; they are not to be elevated above other reading, or to take the place of other reading, neither are they by any means to be excluded. If their general tone is good, if they are pure in spirit, they may be read with absolute advantage. Truth may be conveyed in other ways than by sermons, or ethical essays, or scientific tracts, or matter-of-fact stories with an appended moral. Nay, the mind may be elevated, and put in harmony with truth, even where no definite truth is conveyed. The beautiful creations of Genius, the exquisite productions of Poetry may spirit-

ualize and ennoble. They may be so adapted to the higher wants of the soul, as to breathe into it a new life, and strengthen it for the better performance of the most common duties.

"But is this the only class of writing for the imagination? And does the true culture of that power depend solely upon such reading?"

By no means; we have dwelt upon it here, on account of the natural love which children have for such reading, and because there are those who go to extremes; the one allowing the young to read whatever may fall in their way, and thus filling their minds with objects of terror or folly, and others excluding alike both bad and good. All we would say in regard to this kind of reading is, that, indulged in judiciously, at proper times, and in proper proportions, it would enrich the mind, and give vigor to its perceptive and creative powers.

And now we would add, that the imagination should be addressed in general studies. In Biography, in Geography, in History, as well as in all those studies that relate to nature. How much more will a child enjoy History, if, instead of dates, statistics, and meagre details, the events themselves can be brought before his mind. That which has passed away will seem present, and all may be presented as a life-like and vivid

reality. History may be made the dullest, or the most interesting study, a sepulchre filled with departed events, or the living past moving in vigor before us. A child may study a volume of dates and facts, and in the end know literally nothing of the world's movements. We do not wish history mingled with fancy, or colored in false hues ; neither do we wish it in skeleton nakedness. Let it be reality. When the child hears or reads of past events, bring the whole scene before him. Let him feel that he can see it. Give him the customs, the appearance of the country ; — the workings of the mind ; — the idea that was evolving itself. Then it will not be a mere phantasmagoria, but body and mind.

Let the young see, moreover, the progress of the past, from barbarism to civilization. Let them see the difference between savage life, and Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Christian civilization. Show them Man as the child of the Ages, — working out by severest toil his high destiny ; grappling with difficulties ; struggling through darkness ; now driven back, but again pressing forward into higher and nobler life. History might thus be given, and the grand ideas of past movements in some measure brought out. We should then feel as if we had seen and held intercourse with Jewish pontiffs, Roman orators,

Scotch covenanters, and Pilgrim fathers. We should behold them in their lives, and understand what they did, or sought to do, and what we have gained by their efforts. It is said by Macaulay, in his magnificent article on Hallam's Constitutional History, that "History should be a compound of poetry and philosophy, impressing general truths on the mind by a vivid representation of particular characters and incidents. While our historians," he says, "are practising all the arts of controversy, they miserably neglect the art of narration, the art of interesting the affections, and presenting pictures to the imagination. That a writer may produce these effects without violating truth, is sufficiently proved by many excellent biographical works. The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason. It would be not merely traced on the mind, but branded into it. Many truths, too, would be learned, which can be learned in no other manner."

The same remarks apply generally to Geography. Names, statistics, latitude and longitude, give but a poor idea to the young mind. Let them see, in thought, the icy shores of the north, and the perpetual verdure of the tropics; the desert sand, the rocky coast, the prairie, and the

wilderness; the foaming cataract, which leaps into the abyss; and the river, which, in its long course, mirrors mountain crags, fields, and meadows, the quiet village and populous city. In speaking of any country, let the idea of that country be presented as distinctly as possible. Bring before the mind not only its general outlines, but the character of its vegetation, the manners of the people, the aspect of the scenery, and the characteristics of thought and trade, whether in literature or the arts, commerce or manufacturing. Then will there be an understanding of things, and not merely a recollection of words. Much has of late been accomplished in this way to facilitate study, and much more, we doubt not, will yet be done. The same remarks which have been made in relation to history and geography, will apply in a great measure to geology, botany, and the various branches of natural history. If mere scientific terms are brought together, all will be dry and dead; but if we will take the terms and connect them with nature, we shall gain our end. Barren rules and unintelligible phrases may be retained by the memory, but of how much more value are they if connected with clear thought, and a full understanding of their connexion with reality. We can hardly be surprised that Herder reverently exclaimed, "My God! how dry and

withered a thing many people figure to themselves the soul of a child!" And no wonder that it should be withered and dry, if it is made a mere storehouse of names, instead of ideas; of sound without sense, and shadows without substance. Let realities be taught, as well as technicalities, and, in the place of abstruse generalizations, there will be vivid perception and practical knowledge.

The same suggestions may be applied to religious instruction. The Old and New Testaments are full of the picturesque. They appeal on every page to the imagination. Of Jesus, it is said, "without a parable spake he not unto them." We should do well to become so thoroughly acquainted with Jewish customs and the scenery of Palestine, that when we speak of any part of the ministry of Christ, or of the apostles, we may call up vividly the whole scene. Nothing will impress the mind more than this. So, also, in considering any virtue or duty, it will be well, not simply to consider it abstractly, but to consider it also in action. In expressing ourselves upon these subjects to others, and particularly to the young, every word which connects our thought with real life, which makes it stand out to the mind as a picture, will tend to fix it in the memory, and make that memory the source of greater good.

From what has been said, it will be seen that

we consider the culture of the imagination as exceedingly important ; — that it will facilitate the mind in acquiring knowledge, — and that its natural tendency is greatly to enlarge and enrich all its other powers.

The imagination is a native faculty of the soul. Its growth is at first spontaneous. It simply needs guidance. Live it will, in some form, but whether for evil or for good depends on its culture. If we would keep the imagination healthy, we must give it proper employment. To prevent it from going in a wrong direction, we have only to keep it in the right. Preoccupy it by what is good. Present to it the pure and fair ; then will its love for the true shield it from the false ; — it will stand as the uncompromising friend of Virtue ; — and, as the flaming cherubim guarded the gates of Eden, it will guard the avenues of the soul.

FAMILIAR THINGS.

In each breeze that wanders free,
And each flower that gems the sod,
Living souls may hear and see,
Freshly uttered words from God!

Had we but a searching mind,
Seeking good where'er it springs,
We should then true wisdom find,
Hidden in familiar things!

Shells and pebbles on the shore,
Buds and leaves by Nature wrought,
Would contain, for evermore,
Food for philosophic thought.

God is present, and doth shine
Through each scene beneath the sky,
Kindling with a light divine,
Every form that meets the eye.

Nature with eternal youth
Ever bursts upon the sight,
All her works are types of truth!
Mirrors of celestial light!

But the soul, when veiled in sin,
And eclipsed with fear and doubt,
From the darkened world within
Throws its shade on that without.

While to those, who, pure in heart,
For the Truth their powers employ,
She will constant good impart,
And diffuse perpetual joy.

As the day-star from above
Sheds its light from pole to pole,
So the beams of holy Love
Stream forth, sun-like, from the soul!

If the Mind would Nature see,
Let her cherish Virtue more;
Goodness bears the golden key
That unlocks her palace door!

THE LOVE OF NATURE.

"I have been made to feel, that there is no oratory like that which has heaven for its roof, and no teaching like the teaching of the Spirit which created, and still overshadows, the world with its infinite wing."

WILLIAM HOWITT.

"'Neath cloistered boughs, each floral bell that swingeth,
And tolls its perfume on the passing air,
Makes Sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer.

"Were I, O God! in churchless lands remaining,
Far from all voice of teachers and divines,
My soul would find, in flowers of thy ordaining,
Priests, sermons, shrines!"

HORACE SMITH.

THE LOVE OF NATURE.

CHILDREN have a natural love for the country. They may be shy of strangers, but Nature is never a stranger. A spontaneous friendship exists between Nature and Childhood. As soon as they meet they are playmates. Have you ever known a child who did not love to roam in the fields ; to play by the rushing stream ; to collect shells ; to gather flowers ; to watch birds ; to climb trees and rocks ? There is a freshness and freedom about children, which gives them a keen relish for the country. They love to frolic in the waving grass, to pull butter-cups, to watch the wind playing among the leaves, to see the swallow build her nest under the roof, or the robin in the orchard ; to stand by the stream and notice the sparkling sand and smooth pebbles, or shout as they behold the insects with their thread-like legs gliding over the surface, or some little fish shooting out from a shady nook, and darting by

like a sunbeam. This love for Nature in the child is a beautiful characteristic, and for many reasons should never be checked, but wisely cherished. It has both its intellectual and its moral uses. Let us for a moment seriously consider them.

The mind has in itself the springs of thought, a capacity for knowing. The highest object of education is not so much to impart, as to awaken a love for acquiring; that sincere love, which will, and which must, acquire. Another great object in education is to impart a knowledge, not so much of words, as of things; not abstractions, but absolute realities. Now Nature exerts, in connexion with these two ideas, great power; for, first, she does not give her lessons in the form of tasks. She wins by imparting joy, by awakening love; and thus the faculties of the soul are naturally and joyously brought to her service. There is nothing obtrusive or repulsive about her, and the mind looks to her with calm and hearty affection. She also excites our wonder. In her presence we become inquisitive. While we behold much, we feel that there is much which, as yet, we do not perceive. We are tempted to inquire, and, whenever we inquire, something new is always revealed. The more we know, the more we perceive there is to learn. Thus the desire to gain information is perpetually quickened, and this by realities.

No one can have seen children when in the country, without having noticed their inquisitiveness. The birds must be watched, in order to discover the method of nest-building; and the little seed must be uncovered, that the wondering eye may behold the earliest movement of its growth. Nature excites interest and awakens thought. She presents a boundless field of wonders; she lavishes them everywhere. She hangs them over us in the high firmament; she scatters them beneath us on the blossoming earth. Wherever the eye may turn, wherever the feet may wander, there are her treasures. From the revolving orbs that circle through space, to the liquid drop that shines on a blade of grass; from the mighty planet to the minutest atom, — all is calculated to awaken thought; all is inwrought with wisdom; and the myriad parts, moving in harmonious union, are upheld by the same eternal laws. Thus may we linger around one object, and find perfectness there, or soar from that, until we circle creation, and behold a unity in all.

Nature has lessons for infant thought, and tasks for gigantic power. The untutored mind looks around with wonder; and a Newton, scaling the heavens, finds heights yet stretching far beyond his highest skill. Thus Nature opens her gates to aspiring genius, and presents her hand to the

humblest child. She holds the bands of Orion, and finishes the gauzy web on the wing of a fly. Hence persons of any capacity may find somewhat in Nature to learn. Though they look upon the frailest leaf, they will see something that is a part of the great whole. And when they view the expanding landscape ; when they see the wandering clouds, now sleeping in the soft sky, and now hurrying on, while their shadows glide over the valleys and up the sides of the hills ; when they see these, or any natural object, their attention will be excited, curiosity will kindle, and the young heart overflow in a thousand innocent questionings. Then the seeing eye is opened, the vital spark burns ; and that inward life, which is the source of all true progress, is intense with action. The mind of a child moves as upon wings of light ; now it is impatient to analyze every thing, and now it is lost in silent contemplation. At one moment it seems absorbed in its own musings ; and the next, as by an intuitive glance, it pierces into the very heart of things, and fills us with surprise by its profound insight.

The country, then, is calculated to call forth the intellectual powers ; and children may here derive much useful knowledge, and have awakened within them desires for information, which may lead, in after life, to high excellence.

There is a tendency in Nature to lead every mind to observe for itself ; to compare ; to discriminate. In books, things are classified and arranged ; in Nature, there is a natural fellowship and freedom. Astronomy may be written of in one book, Botany in another, and Geology in a third ; but in Nature, the flowers grow among rocks, and the stars shine over all. In the world there is ever a rich profusion, a countless variety bound in harmonious brotherhood, all separate, yet all as one. The oak may stand by the side of the pine, and violets bloom under both. The kingdoms of Nature are all distinct, and are yet all intimately connected with each other. The flower clings to the rock, the rock to the earth, the earth to its sphere, and all are borne together amid numberless systems, unerringly guided by the same unseen Power. The mind is naturally called, therefore, to observe and compare. Flower is compared with flower, bird with bird, and both with the earth, and the air, and all things around. Resemblances and differences are noticed, contrivance and adaptation investigated ; and a habit of close judgment, and a discriminating use of one's own faculties may thus be encouraged.

It is undoubtedly true, that many live in the country, both old and young, who do not feel

these influences ; so also there are many who live among books and never grow wise, and in the midst of religious institutions and never grow holy. There is nothing compulsory in Nature. We are free, in her presence, to use or neglect her influences, — but there is in her works a power, the natural effect of which is to unfold the intellectual faculties and quicken the inner life, — particularly in early years.

But the influence of Nature is not chiefly over the intellect, its highest influence is spiritual. There is always in Nature an infinitude, which carries the mind out of itself ; a vastness, which expands the soul, and fills it with awe ; a mysteriousness, which connects the seen with the unseen. Go where we will, there is much that is impenetrable ; every thing, even that which is most common, has relation to things distant and unknown. There is a marvel, wonderful as a miracle, in every thing ; a mystery, beyond our power to explain. The child is a new visiter in this astonishing world. It is not ashamed to wonder. Its imagination is alive ; its young thoughts are fresh and vigorous. There is solemnity in the twilight shade of a wood ; the stream comes from it knows not whence, and flows it knows not whither ; the ocean conceals unimaginable caverns : The instinct of birds, what is it ? Who

guides these winged wanderers in their distant migrations? The change of the seasons, the coming of day and night, — these, and a thousand other objects, are sources of thought, and in their various relations reach away into highest heights, even to God. All nature borders upon Infinitude, and is united with the Supreme Mind. It thus lifts the soul out of the minute into the universal, and tends to spiritualize its powers.

Another effect of nature upon the mind is to awaken trust. There is something abiding amid her constant changes; something upon which we can rely. The seasons come and go, but they do so in unchanging order. The day fades into night, but the dawn as surely follows. Life sinks into decay, but out of decay springs new life and beauty. The surface of nature is subject to innumerable changes, but through all these fluctuations there are unvarying laws. There is no chance, no fate, but perfect order, guided by wisdom. This the observing mind soon feels; even the mind of a child. We all trust nature. We place the seed in the ground with faith. At evening we look, without distrust, for the kindling stars; and when morning comes, for the rising sun. Nature has a moral effect in awakening this confidence, this reliance upon abiding laws, and that mind must be insensible indeed, which does not connect these laws with God.

There is another source of moral influence in nature, namely, her quietness. Ever moving on with incalculable force, and filled with mightiest energies, she is always calm. There is through all her motions perfect repose, a majestic tranquillity. See the flying orbs, how serenely they smile. Behold the blooming Spring, how gently she advances. Watch the growing forest, how gradual its growth. No one can have lived long amid the works of nature, and not have been impressed by the calmness which pervades even her most prodigious revolutions. So peacefully does she move on, we can hardly realize the greatness of the work she is silently bringing about. We may be stirred by the rushing tornado, we may be awed by the fearful convulsions which threaten to burst asunder the globe ; but all this does not elevate the mind like the quietness which she generally exhibits. Even the startling outbursts of nature impress us the more when we remember the slow process by which they were actually brought about. The crashing thunder, which bursts over us with astounding fury, was silently forged in the softness of summer skies. In the general calmness of nature is a power, which will aid in moulding the infant soul.

In the beauty of nature is another source of moral influence. Beauty is everywhere. In this

respect the world is a paradise ; the hills are robed in loveliness ; every tree and flower has some peculiar grace. What a variety of form, and hue, and fragrance ! Who can look around, even upon the most common scene, and not feel some enthusiasm ? Beauty in nature says to us, as John in his Gospel, " God is love." Beauty moves, and elevates, and purifies the soul. " A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." It kindles the affections ; it appeals to an inward sense of the soul, — the sense of the beautiful. It shines out to us as a beam from heaven ; for all beauty in nature is of God, and when we see it we see a reflection from God. The Divine Fountain, in its infinite fulness, has overflowed creation, till it gleams and sparkles on every side : — The impenetrable wilderness, the depths of ocean, the heights of space, all seem filled from the same inexhaustible source with an almost divine beauty of color and of form.

There is moreover in nature a direct spiritual meaning. Every thing in nature is emblematic, and contains a direct lesson, a revelation from God. " Invisible things," says Paul, " are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Before forms existed, they were ideas in the Divine Mind. He willed them to exist. Before they were called into existence they were thoughts. When they sprang into being, the

thing created resembled that thought from which it originated, so that the form was an idea made visible. In the works of nature, therefore, we see visibly, that which was a divine thought. We say that we see marks of wisdom in nature. Now the wisdom is of God ; that is his signet. The form, which bears the mark of wisdom, is a form, the wisdom is God's. We say, that we see in nature the marks of love. Love is a principle, not a form. The form may be an expression of love, but the love itself is superior to the form ; that is of God. When, then, we look upon any object in nature, and see wisdom, and goodness, and love, we go above form, and commune with spirit, and that spirit is God. The thing made, manifests its Maker, and we hold fellowship with Him. Wisdom and love are his attributes ; they shine through nature as the sun shines through a cloud. The material world is as a veil, to soften the ineffable brightness, which else were too overpowering for mortal vision. Through this transparency we see the workings of parental care. Thus, through creation, we can commune with the Creator, the author of beauty and source of all good ! He hath in nature spread out his mind as in a book, filled with exquisite imagery and gorgeous allegories. In the floating mist, in the foaming torrent, and in all the myriad glories with

which nature is crowded, God has manifested to us the grand and the beautiful, that we might rise, through these, to the good and the true.

Thus in nature there is much to interest and influence a pure mind ; and such an influence, in some degree, does nature breathe over childhood. With wise guidance, this influence might be more perceptibly felt. "I shall not," says Paley, in closing his noble work on Natural Theology, "I shall not be contradicted when I say, that if one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature, with a constant reference to a supreme, intelligent Author. The world thenceforth becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration."

It is not to be supposed, that a mind, which actually feels the influences here named, will necessarily reason and philosophize about them at the time. We may be moved by causes which are not comprehended even by ourselves. Thus a young mind may be elevated and purified in the presence of nature, while it yet remains unconscious of the spiritual process which is quietly going on.

These are reasons, among others, which make me feel that children should spend some of their time in the country. That they should have op-

portunity to let their warm affections go freely out over the expanding hills, to enjoy the freshness of the earth, to inhale the pure breeze, and commune with the soul and beauty of the universe. I would have the love of Nature cultivated ; for this, like every good thing, requires encouragement and direction. I would have children spend a portion of their time where they can behold the splendor of creation ; where the wild flowers shake their loose bells, and the red clover bends in the breeze ; where beauty, and fragrance, and melody meet, and the young may muse, or frolic, in inexpressible delight. A green lane, a moss-covered rock, a blossoming tree, any thing in Nature, will delight the young.

Let them store their minds with such scenes, it will be as a rich treasure in after years. Amid the dust of the populous city, on the waves of the ocean, wherever they may be, memory will rejoice in such recollections. How many in mature life have been won back to purity by the remembrance of boyhood. The glitter of fashion could not obliterate the memory of by-gone days. The excitements of active life could not altogether turn the current of youthful feeling ; and Nature, with her simple beauties still living in the memory, has given a distaste for grosser pleasures, and awakened in the soul tranquillity and devotion.

If we would cultivate true taste for the Arts, or inspire within the soul a high appreciation of Genius, we should do so amid the works of Nature. If you would have a child bend with sincere enthusiasm over the glowing page of the poet, take him where the poet himself kindled his own soul. The child should behold what the poet has seen, and read that great volume, from which all others are, in a measure, but translations. Here is the "living coal" which will set fire to the heart. Here is the spell which will unlock each treasure-house of the mind. Here stood the mighty men whose words have enchanted the world. They drank at the gushing fountain; they gathered their jewels from hill and meadow. Let us also search the valleys. Let us feel the mountain wind, and behold the rising mist.

> "Nothing is lost upon him who sees
> With an eye that feeling gave;
> For him there 's a story in every breeze,
> And a picture in every wave."

Let the child, then, hold fellowship with nature, pluck flowers from the hedge, and roam at liberty among the fields, and he will be likely to acquire a healthy vigor of body, discriminating judgment, and purity of taste. Nature may not do this for the child without additional culture,

but with a little wise direction this will follow as a natural result. We are told of Claude Lorraine, that he would wander out on summer evenings in Italy, with a few friends, and, sitting down in the shade, he would direct their attention to the delicate appearances of sunshine and shadow, until it seemed as if a curtain were rolled up from the face of the world, and all things were clothed in new glory. Thus were their eyes opened to increasing loveliness, and a higher standard of taste fixed for ever in their minds. If it requires close thought to see as an Artist sees, so it must require the same to appreciate the Artist's work. And if we would guide the youthful mind, and direct its observation to the phenomena around us, the whole earth would seem henceforth as one vast picture gallery, filled with the very models of art, yielding inexpressible delight, and awakening a true admiration for the higher efforts of man. A sense of the beautiful thus unfolded would become a living and creative principle, simplicity of taste would be strengthened, and the mind, even in its common wanderings, might, almost unconsciously, collect material for useful and scientific reflection.

In order that the mind may rightly appreciate nature, as has already been said, it needs direction and culture. And to give this direction to

the young mind, we must ourselves have what we would impart. Lecturing and preaching will not do it. Dry homilies and prosaic commonplace are little calculated to stir the depths of the soul, or awaken spiritual insight. Drilling a young mind over a book of poetry or philosophy, and hoping thus to force it into a right feeling, may create cant, or an artificial sentimentality, but will never awaken a free, healthy, generous taste ; a true love for God or his works. We should baptize our own souls at the fount of nature, tune our thoughts to her harmony, and then will our spirits breathe forth goodness and love, as fragrance is breathed by a flower. When we thus speak of nature it will not be a mechanical effort, and will therefore not produce mechanical effect. Our words will distil as dew, and our feelings be gently diffused through other minds. Then, whether we see with the eye of the Poet, the Artist, or the Naturalist, our influence will not be harsh or unpleasant, but tranquil and inspiring.

Would that children in cities were more conversant with country life. I have known the children of the destitute, watch, with tender solicitude, a few sickly roots that grew by their hovels. I have seen boys, who took as much pleasure in the growth of a dew-plant or a geranium, as in any amusement ; and I have heard of

mothers, who labored through the long day for the support of their families, and who would rise before the sun, that they might attend to a few shrubs and vines, for the delight of their children. May God bless the children of the poor! He does, yes, he does bless them. The evening star shines in at their window. But, alas! crowded dwellings shut out the refreshing breeze, and narrow lanes leave little space, to which the root of a solitary flower may cling. Oh! I have at times exclaimed, Oh! that these children of penury could leave their darkened abodes, and dwell amid the glories of nature, breathe the fragrant air, and behold the splendor of the rising and setting sun. As it is, they feel happy, if, at long intervals, or on some holiday, they catch a glimpse of Nature. Or, still worse, they become debased, and care little for nature, or nature's God.

Would that all children who live in the country could appreciate their privilege, and by proper guidance obtain the seeing eye, and hearing ear. This must come from spiritual culture, a culture aided by others, or a self-culture, growing out of the energies of the individual mind. The world must be illumined by the inner light. Without this, we might dwell in Paradise, and know it not. With this, the bright marks of Divinity will shine on every side. The world becomes filled with

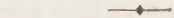
the Presence of the Most High. It is God's, and therefore lovely. It is God's, and therefore good.

The Universe was created by the same Power which formed the soul, and there is an affinity between them. The universe is the soul's book, monitor, and friend. It is a medium of communication between God and the finite spirit. He bends the rainbow, he sends the snow like wool, and scatters the hoar-frost like ashes. He softens the earth with showers, and crowns the year with goodness. He bows his heavens, and comes down, and these are the signs of his presence.

God's works are his hand-writing ; not always clearly understood, needing, as they do, for their interpretation, purity of heart. Isaac went forth to meditate at eventide, and, to the ear of David, the heavens declared God's glory. Thus Nature has a revelation for the spirit, a word of sacred wisdom, a direct word from God. Let us for this reason hold fellowship with her works. Let us consider the lilies of the field, and learn to look on all with heart-felt affection.

> " He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things, both great and small ;
> For the same God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

INFLUENCES OF NATURE.



" For I have learned
To look on nature, — hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity."

WORDSWORTH.

My thoughts go back to boyhood, when I loved
To cherish sweet affections in my heart
For every green and solitary place, —
When the swift rivulet seemed scarce more glad,
Or the wild bird more free. Then I knew
Where every violet found itself a home ;
And where the wind-flower spread its azure leaf,
And gazed upon the sun ; and I could tell
Where the soft twilight of the arching woods
Fell with most tempting beauty, and each haunt
Where Silence listened to the warbling brook,
And fed her soul with music. Then I loved
The mysteries of Nature. Stars on high
Had not more glory than the flowers below ;

The smallest leaf that trembled in the light
Shone with surpassing beauty to my soul,
For, by its slight and cunning workmanship,
I felt that it was God's, and thus I trod,
E'en in the very morning of my life,
Amid the brightness of His universe.

I thirsted for the Beautiful and True;
And when I cherished Beauty, I found that
Which opened all the fountains of my heart,
Gave me a thirst for Virtue and for Love,
And quickened my perception of the Good.

Thus Nature was the interpreter of Truth,
And thus by Nature was my infant soul
Illumined and made pure; and, even now,
I fain would listen to her holy voice,
And teach my spirit by her influence:
I still would love to wander by the side
Of happy inland waters, when they gleam
With the bright lustre of the evening stars;
Or dimple into smiles, and faintly blush
At the first glance of morning. I would still
Love hill and valley, and each wild-wood flower;
I still would wander by the running stream,
And watch the sinking sun, and the soft clouds
Tinted with pearl and amber. I would gaze
Amid the stars, and let my winged thoughts
Go forth, piercing like light the universe.

Thus I would look upon each visible thing,
And ravel out its meaning. I would see
The living emblems of Eternal Truth
Throughout God's works for ever lifted up ;
Till every outward and material form
Should seem a type of things invisible,
The clear outshaping of the thoughts of God,
A Revelation from the Infinite.

AUTUMN.

Upon a leaf-strewn walk,
I wander on amid the sparkling dews ;
Where Autumn hangs, upon each frost-gemmed stalk,
Her gold and purple hues ; —

Where the tall fox-gloves shake
Their loose bells to the wind, and each sweet flower
Bows down its perfumed blossoms to partake
The influence of the hour ; —

Where the cloud-shadows pass
With noiseless speed by lonely lake and rill,
Chasing each other o'er the low crisped grass,
And up the distant hill ; —

Where the clear stream steals on
Upon its silent path, as it were sad
To find each downward-gazing flower has gone
That made it once so glad.

I number it in days,
Since last I roamed through this secluded dell;
Seeking a shelter from the summer rays,
Where flowers and wild birds dwell.

While, gemmed with dew-drops bright,
Green leaves and silken buds were dancing there,
I moved my lips in murmurs of delight,
"And blessed them, unaware."

How changed each sylvan scene!
Where is the warbling bird? the sun's clear ray?
The waving brier-rose? and foliage green
That canopied my way?

Where is the balmy breeze
That fanned so late my brow? the sweet south-west,
That, whispering music to the listening trees,
My raptured spirit blest?

Where are the notes of spring?
Yet the brown bee still hums his quiet tune,
And the low shiver of the insect's wing
Disturbs the hush of noon.

The thin, transparent leaves,
Like flakes of amber, quiver in the light;
While Autumn round her silver fret-work weaves
In glittering hoar-frost white.

Oh, Autumn, thou art blest!
My bosom heaves with breathless rapture here,
I love thee well, season of mournful rest!
Sweet Sabbath of the year!

NATURE.

I LOVE thee, Nature — love thee well —
In sunny nook and twilight dell,
Where birds, and bees, and blossoms dwell,
And leaves and flowers ;
And winds in low, sweet voices tell
Of happy hours.

I love thy clear and running streams,
Which mildly flash with silver gleams,
Or darkly lie, like shadowy dreams,
To bless the sight ;
While every wave with beauty teems,
And smiles delight.

I love thy forests, deep and lone,
Where twilight shades are ever thrown,
And murmuring winds, with solemn tone,
Go slowly by,
Sending a peal like ocean's moan
Along the sky.

I love to watch, at close of day,
The heavens in splendor melt away,
From radiant gold to silver gray,
As sinks the sun;
While stars upon their trackless way
Come one by one.

I love, I know not which the best,
The little wood-bird in its nest,
The wave that mirrors in its breast
The landscape true,
Or the sweet flower by winds caressed,
And bathed in dew.

They all are to my bosom dear,
They all God's messengers appear!
Preludes to songs that spirits hear!
Mute prophecies!
Faint types of a resplendent sphere
Beyond the skies!

The clouds, — the mist, — the sunny air, —
All that is beautiful and fair,
Beneath, around, and everywhere,
Were sent in love,
And some eternal truth declare
From heaven above!

DEATH OF CHILDREN.

"I see, when I have but a short journey to travell, I am quickly at home. If my life bee but my walke, and Heaven my home, why should I desire a long journey? I would not be weary with a long walke, but yet the shorter my journey, the sooner my rest."

WARWICK.

DEATH OF CHILDREN.

Have you ever seen the features of a child slumbering in death? And when you beheld that calm repose, and saw the fair form of youth so motionless before you, has not death itself seemed lovely? Did not the dark image, which will at times haunt us, pass away, and an Angel seem to fill its place?— Yet there is something sad in the death of the young. How many bright hopes are withered! That glad spirit, where is it now? That form so exquisitely fitted for the purposes of life, those lips like parting rose-buds, those soft eyes, and the little hands, so delicately beautiful; these are marvellous treasures to be placed in the tomb, to be buried in dust. Then think of parental grief;— the mother, who leaned over the cradle of the helpless little one, who rocked it on her bosom; the father, whose trials were sweetened, and whose heart glowed with manly joy, as from his labors he turned to

his fireside. Ay, who shall understand a parent's sorrow under such bereavement? But a short time since and all was life, now there is a blank in the family circle. One who was the centre of many attractions has passed away. The object of love and fondest anticipation is no longer among the living. A sense of loneliness fills the heart, and all seems desolate.

But is there no wisdom in all this? Is it inconsistent with the workings of Divine love? Let us look with care, — we may find that the page of trial is illumined, and that even the event over which we mourn is a real good.

How much is there always around us to prove God's wisdom and love! Not only does Nature bear this testimony, but Society through all its complex interests, its great and noble minds, its generous deeds, its abiding friendships. So, also, the individual mind has its rich store of precious hopes and joyous satisfactions, which, even in the midst of sorrow, make us conscious that life is a blessing; and, far more than this, both Reason and Revelation show that even suffering itself has a deep meaning, and holds a high place in the beneficent purposes of God.

It is good for us at times to be sad, to be serious; to meditate profoundly, to send our thoughts earnestly forward to another world; to hush the

sound of mirth, and shade the splendors of life, and hold meek and reverential communion with Him who presideth over all. Those wish not wisely who desire life to be like one strain of music, or the sparkle of a summer's wave. Suffering often calls forth our best feelings, and the highest energies of the mind. It exalts and purifies. It awakens a true spirit, and naturally leads us nearer to heaven. As the shadow of Peter is said to have given life to those upon whom it rested, so often will sorrow give higher life to the soul.

> "He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.
> Eternity mourns that. 'T is an ill cure
> For life's worst ills, to have no time to feel them.
> Where Sorrow 's held intrusive and turned out,
> There Wisdom will not enter, nor true power,
> Nor aught that dignifies humanity."

Although, then, the death of children may bring grief, let us see if, even with mortal vision, we cannot connect it with the loving power of God.

Do we not err in disconnecting this life from the next? In so often limiting our view to the narrow horizon of time? In making heaven so utterly distinct from earth? And do we not also err in fixing our thoughts upon absolute death, rather than absolute Life? What is death but a point between two lives? Nay, what is it but a

circumstance in an unbroken life? the mortal putting on immortality? the heavenly bud expanding? What is Death but Birth? the true spiritual Birth? We weep over the dust, while that for which we weep rejoices in heaven. Until we thus look upon death it will be full of terror. The departure both of the old and the young will seem shrouded in mysterious gloom. When we have a living faith in the spirit, when we bring heaven near at hand, when we have confidence in the all-wise God, then the terror of death will pass away, and the glory of heaven will appear. The sorrow which we feel, will be on our own account, — not selfish, but softened and hallowed. It will not be the sorrow of despair, but the sorrow of resignation and faith.

If any are certain of heaven, children are among that number. They go in their spotless purity. They go as God made them. This view is in accordance with both reason and Revelation, and its tendency is certainly to reconcile us to the death of the young; that death which leads to most glorious life; which opens Paradise to the pure soul, and places it in the arms of that Saviour who said, even when on earth, that of such was his kingdom.

Let us now consider some thoughts that suggest themselves, and which throw an interest

around the death of the Young. First, the death of children, as a fact in human experience, is a fact in itself worthy of much consideration. And if it is allowed that their Spirits enter heaven, this is a subject still more worthy of thought. Into the Elysium of the ancients it was said that children were not permitted to enter. If this were the only difference between the Elysium of the ancients and the Heaven of the Christian, it were indeed great. The fact that children die gives us a very different idea of the spiritual world from what we could have, if none passed away but those who had arrived at maturity of years. If we reflect upon this we shall notice how greatly our views of heaven must be modified by such a consideration. Are these little beings instructed? Do angels teach them? Is innocence without knowledge received there? Is weakness welcome, as well as power? Many, very many, such questions as these naturally spring up in the mind.

The fact that children die is an interesting fact in connexion with our ideas of spirit. It may aid in throwing light upon the soul. When children die, their intellectual and spiritual powers are but little developed. We know that if they had remained here, those powers would have been called forth. How is it now? Is the physical

organization identical with the spirit? Or, is the organization one thing, and the spirit another? If the physical organization is the spirit, or is identical with the spirit, then when it dissolves, all dissolves; — but, if the spirit is quite distinct, then the dissolution of the one does not destroy the other. If we believe that the soul has a life of its own, that the spirit was made for a higher life than that of the senses, then when the outward life dies, the spiritual life remains. — Again, in connexion with the death of a child, we naturally ask, "What is the soul?" We see here but little of what we generally call soul. What is the soul? Is there a soul in the child? and, if so, where is it, and what is it? Are its powers to be superadded from without, or are they to be unfolded from within? No one can doubt that the mind will learn much from the world without, from all that it sees and hears. But where are the comprehending faculties? Where is the Thought? the Reason? The mind looks upon matter, and has ideas; now there are no ideas in matter, and we cannot, therefore, literally gather ideas from that which has no ideas. The ideas spring up in the mind, they are of the mind, and derive their origin from its inherent powers. Thus the mind can comprehend a world which cannot comprehend itself. Is, then, this power

within the soul, as the essential law of its life? The question is not now whether in childhood these powers are developed, but whether there may be inherent powers in the soul as yet undeveloped. There may be a living germ before we can see the full-grown plant. Is the germ in the child? We may have powers which are not active; as is the case in sleep, when the greatest genius slumbers in unconsciousness. Nay, every mind, even in its waking hours, has some powers which are not always active. It is not necessary that a power should be active in order to exist. If therefore the powers of the spiritual nature are not all active in childhood, it is no proof whatever that they are not there. It is only a proof that they are not active, that they are not as yet developed. Now if these powers are an inherent part of the soul, then when the body dies, they remain untouched. These powers are folded up in the mind, they have a life of their own above the senses, and may therefore go on, following out their glorious destiny. Has the question never arisen in our minds at the death of a child, What is the mind of a child? What is there that can still exist? If we think of a child only in relation to what we see, to that which is actually developed, it may well seem as if there were nothing to live. Does not, then, the death of children

give us some hints as to the philosophy of mind? Does it not suggest that these powers are slumbering inherent in the soul, that they are independent of the body, and independent of time; sometimes unfolded in connexion with these, and sometimes separate from them? So that if the animal body of the child dies, the spiritual nature has as much to live for as before, all its powers are in it, and wherever it goes, they go, and they can be unfolded in heaven as well as upon earth.

Again. The fact that children die reveals the depths of parental love. This is certainly true, when the parent loses a child. Watch the mother, as she anxiously hangs over her cherished one. See her, as, through the long night, she ministers to its wants. No labor is so arduous, no sacrifice so great, that it can exhaust her love. The more she does, the more she desires to do. Its feeble smiles are her recompense, and its low breathing is watched as if her own fate depended upon her child's safety. Is there hope? her heart fills with joy; but if death comes, the very nerve of her life seems severed. A mother's love! who shall fathom its depths? She knows not her own affections until trial calls them forth. If, then, a child is taken away, and others are left, it throws a degree of sanctity around those who remain. They are not simply connected with this world,

but with another. One has gone, and they also may go. This idea makes every child a monitor pointing to the spiritual world, and, unless parents are insensible to spiritual things, they will, by this means, have their faith strengthened, and their thoughts often led to the home of the soul. But even if the parent does not lose a child, the fact that children may and do die, tends to call out the affections. If it were a fact, that no child had ever been known to die, all children would be looked upon as future men and women. But now there is uncertainty ; there are vague possibilities ; and the present is valued the more because the future is unknown. Fear makes Hope more beautiful. At the thought of separation, the mother presses her child more closely to her bosom, and looks upon it with increased affection. The very idea which she shrinks from, increases her joy, and the uncertainty she wishes dispelled, draws a charmed circle around the child, which makes it the dearer to her heart.

This not only influences the feelings of the parent towards the child, but also the feelings of the child towards the parent. Children notice a mother's love. They see her grief at her loss, or her watchfulness in sickness, or her sympathy for others, and their little hearts are touched by such manifestations of feeling. Such things sink

deep into their young spirits, and all the experiences of after-life will not efface them. Was it not such a love which led Paul F. Richter to speak of his poor, humble mother with such overflowing tenderness? "Unhappy is the man," says he, "for whom his own mother has not made all other mothers venerable!" And elsewhere he writes; "O thou, who hast still a father and a mother, thank God for it in the day when thy soul is full of joyful tears, and needs a bosom wherein to shed them!"

And once more. It is worthy of remembrance that children, who are taken away by death, always remain in the memory of the parent, as children. Other children grow old; but this one continues in youth. It looks as we last saw it in health. The imagination hears its sweet voice and light step; sees its silken hair, and clear, bright eyes, — all just as they were. Ten and twenty years may go by, the child still remains in the memory, as at first, — a bright, happy child.

The young who have been taken away, are taken out from the homely details of domestic management, and, while the remaining children are connected, in thought, with such details, the departed are lifted above them, and thought of in an ideal state, abstracted from every thing except what is pleasant to the mind.

The child which is removed by death is generally considered as the flower of all. The imagination here may have her own way without being checked by any dull reality. The child is thought of, not alone as it was, but as it might have been ; and, in the parent's mind, that child might have been all that hope could picture, or a parent's fondness desire. Thus the lost child is generally considered the most remarkable. Sickness excites the parents' sympathies and strengthens their love ; and in connexion with these feelings, they see its good qualities and brood over all its winning ways. Thus circumstances call forth their affections, and every thing is hallowed by peculiar associations.

With these feelings and associations the child is remembered. Its young and beautiful form moves before us ; and what is such a memory but an angel-presence ? Certainly next to seeing an angel, is seeing, with a parent's heart, such a cherished form. Amidst this world of ambition and show, who shall say, that this is not a means, under Providence, of subduing and spiritualizing the mind ?

There is something peculiarly sacred in our recollections of the death of the young. There is a tenderness, and delicacy of sentiment, with which we recall their memory. Even the man

of stern energy seems subdued, and the more severe features of his mind are softened, as he muses upon the remembrance of his loved and innocent one. The lost child is idealized by the memory. It is beautifully and truly remarked by Wordsworth, that "the character of a deceased friend is not seen, no, — nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or luminous mist, that spiritualizes and beautifies it; that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely, may impress and affect the more." This is particularly applicable to the memory of a child. A mellow, glowing atmosphere seems to hang around every recollection. All is surrounded by peace and purity. When we remember the lives of older friends, we may think of some things we would wish forgotten, but the more we strive to lose sight of them, the more tenacious may be the recollection; but with the child there is nothing we would wish to forget; it seems idealized by its very nature, and lives in our imagination in connexion with all which we most dearly cherish. Thus, in order to cherish such a remembrance, we are at times willing to turn even from the charms of the living. The sigh becomes sweeter than the song. Sorrow, subdued, becomes a friend, and sacred joy is mingled with the tears of holy recollection.

Thus, as Grief ascends the mount of Time, she seems to pass through a state of transfiguration. The convulsive agony changes to pensive sorrow, and querulous misgivings to quiet meditation. There must be distress; let, then, the gushing tears flow, for it is the course of nature; but, even with this, let there be the victory of the Christian faith, the glorious hope of our holy religion.

> "Such a hope, like the rainbow, a being of light,
> May be born, like the rainbow, in tears!"

There is, in such a trial, a tendency both to humanize and christianize. It brings the soul into stronger sympathy with others, and into closer fellowship with God. The uncertainty of life makes us feel that we are under a government beyond our control; that there is a Power whose ways are above our ways, who dwelleth in light inaccessible, who giveth and who taketh away. Changes and afflictions bring us nearer to Him. He alone can give strength to our weakness, and solace to our grief. He alone can satisfy the deep cravings of our nature. Before Him we sink in weakness, and submission, and filial trust. Where, indeed, can we go so well as unto God, and to that Saviour whom God sent? Was it not Jesus who rent the veil and permitted us to gaze up into

heaven ? Was it not Jesus who said to his followers, before his departure, " I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am ye may be also," and who said even of children, " Suffer them to come, and forbid them not " ?

Epictetus taught men silently to endure the sorrows which he could not explain. Zeno taught men sternly to conceal the grief which he could not calm. But it was Christ alone who showed us the sublime purposes of God, and filled us with resignation and love. Well did he say, " My peace I give unto you." Not as the world giveth did he give, but, that we might inherit that legacy, he endured the darkest perils of persecution, ay, and the bitterness of death. All the young who have gone, have gone to his presence, to receive his welcome and blessing.

They have gone before : — and whither are we journeying ? Is it not to the world of spirits ? How, then, can we so well learn to love that land, as by feeling that our treasures are there ? for where our treasures are, there will our hearts be. With what joyous anticipations may we look forward, if we can feel that those whom we have loved will be there to meet us ! And do not reason and Revelation both join in giving us this hope ? Is not heaven always spoken of as a social state ? Is it ever spoken of in any other

way? Does not Christ say, we shall be with him? and does not Paul speak of our union together? Is it not understood that, in another world, our minds will be essentially the same as they are in this? That we shall be ourselves, and not a new creation? That our consciousness, memory, affections will not be obliterated, but remain what they are now? Why, then, should we not know, and be known? Why should we not hold intercourse with one another, and commune together in love? If it is the divine law of God, that we should love one another here, why should it not be, to love one another there? Would it not be the first generous impulse of our nature? Would not to live be to love? When friends are taken away, Oh, how often, from the throbbing heart, bursts forth the question, "Shall we ever meet again?" — and may it not be answered, almost with positive certainty, You will? Is there any one who can for a moment believe that we are to live in an eternal solitude? If not, then we shall live with kindred minds; and if any thing is clearly revealed in Scripture, it is, that with such minds we shall live. No one doubts that we shall know Jesus; and if we are to know that blessed being, why should we not know one another? Is not the idea of again meeting prompted by Affection, strengthened by Reason, and confirmed by Rev-

elation? Here, then, is a view which comes like an angel of mercy to the sorrowing heart. The object we loved we shall again meet. We need not think of heaven as a world where all will be lost in abstractions, or where we shall be absorbed into Infinity. We need not think of it as a land of strangers, but as the dwelling-place of friends. Those whom we love, and who love us, are there. They live in our memory and we in theirs. We wish once more to be with them, and they will gladly bid us welcome;

> "And when a mother meets on high,
> The babe she lost in infancy,
> Hath she not then, for pains and fears,
> The day of woe, the watchful night,
> For all her sorrows, all her tears,
> An overpayment of delight?"

And is it not well with us, when we have such ties binding us to that better world? when, even while here, we can send forth our thoughts and affections to twine yet more closely about those who were once with us here, and by whom even now we are remembered with love? When a child dies, it is not lost. It has gone, in its brightness and purity, to be yet more beautiful and pure. As the morning star, it has melted into the light of day, yet it still shines and moves on in its appointed sphere.

A SISTER'S GRAVE.

"Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there."

COLERIDGE.

The leaves, by tranquil breezes fanned,
In summer beauty o'er me wave,
While here, in loneliness I stand,
And muse beside my sister's grave.
My sister's grave! — Ah, who can tell
The thoughts that through my bosom swell,
In naming one who was so dear,
While mournfully I linger round
This spot of consecrated ground,
And feel that now she slumbers here?

Five years have passed, — five changing years, —
Since here, beneath this twilight shade,
With broken sighs and gushing tears,
That sister's lovely form was laid;
Five changing years! yet even now
I gaze, as then, upon her brow,
And seem to hear a low, soft voice,
Which bids my very heart rejoice;

And then I start and weep, to find,
That that which blessed my ear and eye
Was but a vision of the mind,—
The echo of a voice gone by;—
For here I see the long grass wave
Sadly above my sister's grave!

Yet there is beauty here. The bee
Hums sweetly through the summer hours,
And the soft breezes wander free
'Midst bursting leaves and budding flowers;
And on the air is borne along
The lonely wood-bird's plaintive song;
While the mild sunlight, like a spell,
Slumbers upon each hill and dell:—
What wonder, then, that to my heart,
This grave which in such beauty lies,
Where earth and heaven their charms impart,
Should seem the Gate of Paradise,
Where Faith, with her sweet smile of love,
Points to the glorious heavens above?

And often thus, to this lone glen,
I will with thoughtful footsteps turn,
Far from the busy haunts of men,
The purposes of life to learn;—
Till, laid beside my sister's grave,
The same long grass o'er both shall wave.

THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

She was even yet in childhood, but she seemed
Wasting in strength, like a half-opened bud
Bowing upon its stem. She lay at rest,
Her young heart leaning with a perfect faith
Upon the word of God ; and thus her eye
Shone with such inward light, and her pale lips
Moved with such smiles, that even those who wept
Felt in their inmost hearts a thrill of joy.

With what a marvellous vigor can the soul
Put forth its hidden strength, looking at Death
As at an Angel from the courts of God!
And with what beauty, at the closing hour,
Will childhood's sweet affections blossom out!

There she lay ; — peaceful as if in slumber ;
A thoughtful calmness resting on her brow,
And the long silken lashes of her eyes
Pressed meekly to each other ; while her heart

Seemed musing upon things that were to come,
Or raised in silent worship. All was still; —
There came no sound upon the summer air
Except the birds' faint warble, or the voice
Of the low-murmuring stream. Her pulse had stopped, —
And those who gathered round leaned slowly o'er
To see if yet she breathed; — when suddenly
She started in her bed, upright; spread out her arms,
And, fixing upon space her kindling eyes,
As if she saw her glorious home in heaven,
"How beautiful! how beautiful!" she cried,
And, sinking on her pillow, — passed away.

HYMN ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD,

AS SUNG BY HER LITTLE SCHOOL-MATES.

One sweet flower has drooped and faded,
One sweet infant voice has fled,
One fair brow the grave has shaded,
One dear school-mate now is dead.

But we feel no thought of sadness,
For our friend is happy now;
She has knelt in soul-felt gladness,
Where the blessed angels bow.

She is now where harps are ringing
Through the heavenly courts above,
And her silvery voice is singing,
With glad spirits, hymns of love.

She has gone to heaven before us,
But she turns and waves her hand,
Pointing to the glories o'er us,
In that happy spirit-land.

May our footsteps never falter
In the path that she has trod;
May we worship at the altar
Of the great and living God.

Lord, may Angels watch above us,
Keep us all from error free, —
May they guard, and guide, and love us,
Till, like her, we go to Thee.

CONCLUSION.

"It is not by laying up in the memory the particular details of any of the great works of Art that any man becomes a great Artist, if he stops without making himself master of the great principles on which those works are conducted."

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

CONCLUSION.

THE admirable remarks of Sir Joshua Reynolds in regard to painting are equally applicable to those who would understand the human mind, or aid in spiritual culture. It is not in the knowledge of particular details, but in making ourselves thoroughly acquainted with general principles, that we can arrive at the most important conclusions, and labor to the greatest advantage for the good of others. Still, in Education, as in the Arts, details have their value, and are often as important, in their place, as principles. No duty is so trifling as to be unworthy of notice. The smallest wheel, in a complicated machine, may be as essential to its perfect movement, as the largest. So we may gain positive advantage from minor points, as well as from great and universal truths. We should give due attention and respect to both.

The most beautiful system will prove power-

less, and the noblest theory become impotent, unless supported by an intelligent mind, while, on the other hand, a living, intelligent mind would rectify a bad system, or originate one for itself, in accordance with its own ideas; for where there is a soul truly alive to the importance of its efforts, good measures will, as it were, spring up spontaneously. Thus, with all who would instruct, whether parents or teachers, a right state of mind is, above all things, essential; a soul glowing with generous love, with high hopes, and noble aspirations. The very greatest work to be done by all is, to stir up the depths of their own souls, bring forth their best powers, and consecrate them to God.

When there is this state of mind, there will be a natural desire to understand the philosophy of things, and to comprehend their interior principles. To gain this knowledge is infinitely more important than to be conversant with the mere details of any system. Without this love for general principles, the best rules are but shackles to enslave the mind, or, at best, but crutches to prop up the infirm. We should rise above the minute into the universal, and understand those general laws which will enable the mind to shape its particular plans according to individual cases. Then may the soul become the master of all systems,

and the slave of none. It will have a gigantic grasp, which will make all before it flexible, and thus every rule will be made to bend to the peculiar circumstances under which it is applied. Such a knowledge can only be acquired by study. It was an ancient saying, that "labor is the price which the gods have set upon every thing valuable." A teacher should seek to understand the whole constitution of body and mind. He should become acquainted with every faculty, and its various modes of operation. He should study truth, and the best means of imparting it to others. And all this requires mental effort, sound sense, extended observation, and strong, steadfast endeavour. Slight and superficial observation is not sufficient. Every parent and every teacher should strive to solve the great problems of life. To pierce through every intricacy, and understand somewhat at least of those spiritual laws which run through all things, and hold all together. And is not such study open to all? nay, does it not claim from all profound interest? Who would not look down into the abyss of being? Who would not understand the principles of a mind which is to exist through limitless duration? Who would not trace that unbroken chain of cause and effect which stretches through the whole expanse of the universe, hanging upon the remotest

limits of the future and the past? And these studies, which should interest all, not as a matter of necessity, but choice, should awaken deep thought on the part of every teacher, and lead to a comprehension of the grand principles of education; principles which should underlie all methods of instruction; principles, not narrow and confined, but broad, and of universal application, connected as they are with God and humanity.

After having acquired general principles, the next important duty is to understand the best measures to bring about the end. The parent and instructer should not only have true views, but understand how to impart them. Much drudgery and repetition will be saved by wise method. Here rules and details are of essential service. They economize time and strength. And if there is a true good sense, and an understanding of spiritual laws, they will never become mechanical. The danger to which we have alluded will be avoided. In the place of dull routine will be perpetual life. Through all details will be breathed a living soul; and a system, which might otherwise become cold and formal, will have constant freshness, by an adaptation on the part of the Teacher to the new wants of the mind, in every stage of its progress, and under every varying circumstance.

To have a clear, definite plan, and a knowledge of the details by which to bring about our ends, becomes not merely an advantage recommended by prudence, but a duty imperatively demanded by reason.

As the Poet must not only have poetic thought, but be able to embody it with artistical skill; as the true Artist must not only have the spiritual conception, but an understanding of every branch of his art, even to the grinding of paint, — so also the Instructer should not only cherish general principles and abstract notions, but he should also have a power of adaptation, and an ability to bring all his views into practical use. He will then have definite rules, and philosophical method; while his principles will flow through them, as nourishment flows through every branch, bud, and blossom of a tree.

It has been the object of this volume briefly to unfold some principles connected with spiritual culture. To speak of some of the characteristics of childhood, — the growth of the mind, — the culture of the imagination, — the love of nature, — the importance of religious sentiment as connected with all the branches of education; and also to go at times somewhat into detail in regard to methods of instruction. If any views have been suggested which will be of ser-

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